

***The Challenges of Christmas:
Believing the Impossible ~ Luke 1:37***

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Introduction: This Christmas season we have been walking through the Christmas story looking at the special challenges of Christmas. From Joseph and Mary, we learned that one challenge is *putting God's plans ahead of our own plans*. From Simeon and Anna, we struggled with the difficult lesson of *waiting on God*. Today, we will discover the challenge of *believing God for the impossible*.

Text: ²⁶ *In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And [the angel] came to her and said, "Rejoice, favored woman! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. ³⁰ Then the angel told her:*

*Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.*

³¹ *Now listen:*

*You will conceive and give birth to a son,
and you will call His name JESUS.*

³² *He will be great
and will be called the Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give Him
the throne of His father David.*

³³ *He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
and His kingdom will have no end.*

³⁴ *Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?"*

³⁵ *The angel replied to her:*

*The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the holy One to be born
will be called the Son of God.*

³⁶ *And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."*

3 Factors Related to Believing God for the Impossible:

1. Confidence in God's Promises.

My greatest fear in preaching this sermon this morning is that somebody is going to misunderstand this particular message and believe God for something that is impossible and it is impossible because God said it is impossible—that is not in accordance to His will. In other words, this verse should not lead us to say that "All things are possible," but rather all things that God promises are possible even when everyone else says that those things are impossible. There's a difference, you know!

Let me see if I can illustrate what I'm trying to say. I'm not going to come to you some Sunday and announce, "I'm resigning so that I can become the quarterback for the New Orleans Saints." You would say, "That's impossible!" What if I came back, "For nothing will be impossible for God! I believe that, and so I'm going to trust God!"

Compare that with the current story about Tim Tebow, quarterback of the Denver Broncos. Even if you are not a football fan, you ought to read up on Tim Tebow. I believe that God has His hand on this young man's life. Tim was born to missionary parents. A doctor advised his parents that he should be aborted. In spite of warnings about his mother's health, she delivered Tim healthy as ever. He excelled at quarterback. Against the advice of the so-called experts, the Broncos drafted him. The so-called experts said he is not good enough to be an NFL quarterback. They say he is too inaccurate and that he takes too long to throw the ball. In practice and pre-season games, it looked well like they could have been right. In one game, he completed only 2 passes, but in 7 games he has started this year, he has won 6 times.

For Mary, everyone would say it is impossible! But God had promised!

The Progression of Faith:

Verse 34: Question—Question, even doubt is ok, so long as the questions turn into faith.

Verse 38: Faith

Verse 45: Testimony—Soon, Mary had a testimony.

The Protection of Faith: Faith keeps us from getting in God's way. We need faith to keep us from getting in God's way of working the impossible out in our lives.

2. Confirmation by God's Past Activity.

One of the greatest tools that God can use in our life to show us that with Him nothing is impossible is His past activity.

- The activity of God in another person's life. Believing God for what seems like the impossible begins with the Christmas story. Christmas is a reminder of miracles. The angel points Mary to her relative Elizabeth for a story of what others would call the impossible.
- The activity of God in my life. Hopefully, we will have our own stories. I think Mary did. Look at her song, especially Luke 1:49.

Maybe your impossible situation is...

- A lost person—what about the Apostle Paul.
- Your own sin—The Bible says, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- Sickness—in miraculous ways, we have been eyewitnesses to God intervening time and time again.

- A family situation—Joseph was abandoned by his whole family, but God used him to restore his family.
- A financial situation—The Bible says, “God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)

Before you give up on God this time, look back at His past activity in your life.

3. Encouragement from other People.

Finally, God uses the stories of other people to encourage you.

- There is a Mary here today. Someone who needs a story.
- There is an Elizabeth here today. Someone who has a story.

Tim [Clark] was born with no legs and one arm, but you will not find even a hint of self-pity in the story he tells. Tim Clark, the child grew into Tim Clark the runner, the swimmer, the table-tennis champion, the motivational and inspirational speaker and author. (Copied from his book jacket)

When Tim wrote his autobiography, he called it *With God, All Things are Possible*.

And they are.

What is your most impossible challenge this morning?

- 1) Do you have a promise from God about that particular matter? Actually, if you do not have a promise from God the issue is not as important as you might think.
- 2) Do you have the faith that with God, nothing is impossible?