

Nothing Will Be Impossible  
Rev. Nicole Farley  
First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha  
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**Romans 16:25-27**

<sup>25</sup> Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

**Luke 1:26-38**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God.' <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

As Mary got ready to sleep after a long day helping her mother and her aunts make the bread and clean the clothes, she poked at the new blister she had gotten bringing water from the well. She hoped once she and Joseph were married, and she became part of that household of women, that there would be younger girls than she who would have that task. She was still pretty young though, so she resigned herself to the fact that fetching water would be a job of hers for some years to come. One day, though, if God willed it, she would be as old as her mother's cousin Elizabeth and then she could boss around the other women and only take on the work she enjoyed.

She wondered how the world might change by then. Would the Romans still rule over her people? Or would her people finally be freed by the Messiah she heard the teachers speak of, the one they waited on to deliver them from the hands of the Romans? As she lay on her mat, she was half-sleeping, half-dreaming about what their lives might look like after the Messiah came. No more working all day, and doing hard, exhausting work, and yet still not earning enough to support a family. Maybe living in such a rural place wouldn't mean being poorer than the dirt they farmed. And that was for those who were lucky enough to have their freedom to work the land.

Maybe this Messiah would free the neighbors and friends and family who had been harshly imprisoned, with sentences so far exceeding the crimes committed and in such miserable conditions that you wished you were dead instead of alive and incarcerated. Her mother told her not to speak like that, even though she explained it was what the girl at the well had said and she had an older brother who was in prison. Her mother said that didn't matter - it was disrespectful of those who had been killed just because they were Jewish, because the Romans assumed they were posing a threat. Could the Messiah change that, too? It was too late for the cousin for whom she heard her aunt weeping in the middle of the night. Maybe not for others.

Could he feed all those who went to bed hungry, night after night? The teachers were kind of vague about this anointed one. He will know the law and follow the commandments. He will lead others to follow his example. He will win battles for Israel. He will be a mighty judge like Solomon. He will restore the line of King David.<sup>1</sup> Maybe by doing all those things, life will get better. Ah, well, what was the point in daydreaming; the teachers had been teaching that the "mashiach" would be coming for years. Her grandmother spoke of this same hope which had been spoken to her by *her* grandmother. Only God knew how far back people had been hoping for him to appear and only God knew when he would.

As she began to fall into sleep, suddenly there was a great wind and rustling. Had she not known her room like the back of her hand, and had they not been conserving their candles like they had done her whole life, that wind would have surely extinguished any candle. She thought she might be asleep when she heard the words, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." Confused, she sat up and, as she fully woke up, she sank into the corner of her room, terrified of this man she did not know who was suddenly in their house, in her room. He must have realized she was about to scream for he said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now you will conceive in our womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Her planned scream became an unplanned gasp. "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" And that was just the question she could think to speak, as if she heard nothing beyond "you will conceive in your womb and bear a son." The Son of the Most High? The throne of David? The house of Jacob? His kingdom? These were running through her head so loudly that she almost missed what the man, apparently an angel, said next. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/mashiach.htm>

now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Wait – what? Elizabeth was pregnant?

All of this was too much to absorb and she wasn't sure which was hardest to believe. The mighty mashiach would be her little boy. A little boy she would have without knowing Joseph. Because nothing is impossible with God. After all...Elizabeth...having a baby. There really was nothing impossible with God. She had believed that since her youth – the teachers said it with such confidence – but now, she actually knew. And so she said the first thing that came to her, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” And then the angel / man was gone. But she had so many questions! She wasn't going to change her answer but she would have liked to understand, well, anything.

The mystery of when the anointed one would arrive would be made clear...through her. The one about whom the prophets had spoken, the one whom her people had hoped for, yearned for to save them from poverty, oppression, and persecution would be the one whom she would nurse, for whom she would care when he got sick or injured. Her! There was much she did not know nor understand but she understood that she would need to nurture him, care for him, and help him flourish. No matter how insignificant she might seem to others, even helpless, the hope of all the peoples would rely upon her. Every thing she did to tend to that hope brought closer life without poverty, oppression, and persecution. She didn't understand how but she didn't need to – for nothing will be impossible with God.

Let us pray: Here we are, servants of the Lord; let it be with us according to your word, O God. Amen.