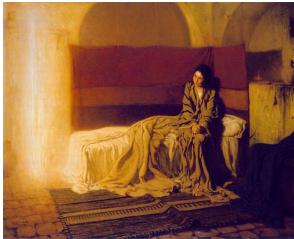


Finding Favor

Luke 1:26-38 HCSB 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." (38) "I am the Lord's slave," said Mary. "May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.



¹Today I would like to focus our attention on the person of Mary. Of all the women of Judah, she was chosen by God to become the mother of the Messiah, the King and Redeemer of Israel.

Gabriel said she was selected because she had "found favor with God." What was it about Mary that caught the Lord's attention? What qualities did she possess which "found favor with God?"

I can't speak for God on that point but I do notice from this passage some noteworthy traits Mary possessed that impress me. I want to briefly point-out six traits that belonged to Mary...and most of them should be our traits, too.

1. She was a person with faith.

When the priest Zacharias was told that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son in their old age, Zacharias doubted the news. However, after being told that she would give birth to the Messiah, Mary did not doubt it in the least. She only inquired as to how God would perform this since she was still a virgin - Verse 34, "And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" Zacharias doubted God's ability to overcome his age. Mary, like the prophet Ezekiel and the apostle Peter, did not want to defile herself. But once God cleared that issue up for her, her response was "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."

2. She willingly surrendered her life to God's will.

Mary did not take thought of the difficulties and inconveniences that would come her way as she would be with Child out of wedlock and then giving birth to the Messiah. Being already engaged to Joseph, I'm sure that she already had her own dreams, goals and wishes for her own life. But, Mary was willing to lay aside what she willed for her life to surrender to what God had planned for her life.

The next set of traits are revealed in Mary's declaration of praise in the home of Elizabeth, recorded in Verses 46-55. Unlike the utterances of Elizabeth and Zacharias, the Scriptures do not indicate that Mary's declaration of praise was the product of the Holy Spirit. In other words, what Mary said came from her own heart. They give us insight to inner character.

¹ Tanner's "Annunciation" <http://www.artchive.com/artchive/t/tanner/annunciation.jpg>

They give us an inkling of the reason why God held her in such high favor.

3. She possessed reverence and adoration for God.

Her words overflow with reverence and adoration or loving worship for God. God's name was precious and sacred - "the Mighty One....holy is His name."

4. She knew the Scriptures.

Now we come to a characteristic that may explain why Mary possessed faith, godly reverence and a willingness to surrender herself to the Lord - Mary knew the Scriptures. Not only did she know of the promises made to the Jewish "fathers" or Patriarchs (verse 55), but she actually quotes word-for-word two Scriptures from Psalms 103 & 107. Obviously, the Word of God was valued by Mary and it was meaningful to her. She memorized portions of the Scriptures which, no doubt, shaped her inward and outward life.

5. She possessed great Intelligence and Insight.

- a. Apart from the effects on her own life, Mary had tremendous understanding of the 'big picture'. She understood the long term impact of what was going on. (v.48)
- b. She also deduced that by God choosing to bring the Messiah into the world by way of a poor, obscure Jewish girl from the back-water town of Nazareth as opposed to having the Messiah be born to a powerful, wealthy and prominent family in Jerusalem or some other major Jewish city, God was scattering those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. (v.51)
- c. She understood the ramifications to the world's power structures. By bringing forth the Messiah, the true heir to the throne of David, while the Herods claimed to be the Jewish kings, God was bringing "down rulers from their thrones, and exalting those who are humble." (v.52)
- d. And, lastly, she had the insight to know that her Son would bring good things for those who hungered rather than for those who considered themselves already full and rich - "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; AND SENT AWAY THE RICH Empty-handed." (v.53)

6. She recognized her own need for salvation.

Mary never claimed to be sinless. We see in Luke 2:24 that when the days of her purification were over and it was time to have Jesus named and circumcised, Mary made sure to offer a pair of turtledoves and two young pigeons. This, according to Leviticus 5:5-10 and 12:6-8, was the sin offering to be made by a poor person who could not afford a lamb.

Later, Mary's faith in Christ's identity and mission wavered. At one point she even tried to declare Him insane! In Mark 3:21 His family declared their belief that He had lost His senses.

- [Mark 3:21 HCSB](#) When His family heard this, they set out to restrain Him, because they said, "He's out of His mind."

The Greek *existemi* sometimes translated "beside himself" is normally used to mean "insane" or "witless". The Greek word *ho para*, translated "his people" also means "*family*."

They went on to try to get him to leave the ministry.

- [Matthew 12:46 HCSB](#) He was still speaking to the crowds when suddenly His mother and brothers were standing outside wanting to speak to Him.
- [Mark 3:31 HCSB](#) Then His mother and His brothers came, and standing outside, they sent *word* to Him and called Him.

- [Luke 8:19-20 HCSB](#) Then His mother and brothers came to Him, but they could not meet with Him because of the crowd. (20) He was told, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see You."

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary was born sinless. However, Mary knew otherwise. She knew her need for salvation in verse 47 of today's passage she referred to God as her "Savior."

- [Luke 1:47 HCSB](#) and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,

Conclusion

Of course, Mary's Child is the Savior of the world. As Jesus said,

- [Luke 19:10 HCSB](#) **For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."**

But can you speak of Jesus as 'my Savior'?

1. You cannot unless you have believed in the Gospel message;
2. You cannot unless you have made the decision to repent;
3. You cannot unless you have surrendered your life to the will of the Lord;
4. You cannot unless you have verbally made your confession that you believe Jesus to be the Son of the living God.

But If you have taken these steps, the Word of God states that you can refer to Jesus the Lord as your personal Savior. Praise the Lord.