

MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS: SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL

LUKE 01: 26-38

Introduction

Little information is given about Mary in the Bible. However, what is said is striking and sets before us a tremendous example of submissiveness to God's will. Submissiveness to God is an absolute essential for every believer.

- I. The angel Gabriel (v. 26)
- II. Mary was pure, a virgin (v. 27)
- III. Mary was highly favoured by God (v. 28).
- IV. Mary was very human (vv. 29-30).
- V. Mary was told she was to bear the Messiah (vv. 31-33)
- VI. Mary was expected to believe the miraculous (vv. 34-35).
- VII. Mary was encouraged to believe: "For nothing is impossible with God." (vv. 36-37).
- VIII. Mary was submissive (v. 38).

I. *Luke 01:26 The Mission of Angel Gabriel*

The angel Gabriel was sent from God. This was Gabriel's second mission surrounding the birth of Jesus (See *Gabriel*, Lk. 1:19). Note the time is given. It was six months after Elizabeth's conception that Gabriel was sent to an obscure village, Nazareth of Galilee. Galilee bordered Gentile or heathen nations; therefore, it was sometimes called Galilee of the Gentiles. Nazareth was a despised city, considered inferior by the rest of Israel. The people were a conquered people especially despised by the Romans. The city and its citizens were the object of deep prejudice by Jews and Romans alike (Jn.1:46) (See *Nazareth*, Mt. 2:23).

Thought 1. God is no respecter of persons or places. He sends a message to Nazareth as readily as He does to Jerusalem (Lk.1:5-25), to a believer in Nazareth (Mary) as quickly as he does to a believer in Jerusalem (Zechariah).

Thought 2. A place, whether city or nation, is not judged by its institutions and advantages, but by the righteous people within its borders.

LUKE 01:19 GABRIEL

Gabriel means the *man of God* or the *hero of God* or the *mighty one of God*. Note that Gabriel said two things about himself...

1. He is the one who actually stands in the presence of God.

2. He is the one who brings good news to men.

=> He shared the restoration of Israel with Daniel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21f).

=> He shared the birth of the forerunner with Zechariah (Lk. 1:130).

=> He shared the birth of the Messiah with Mary (Lk. 1:26f). □

MATHEW 02:23 NAZARETH

The hometown of Jesus' parents, Joseph and Mary, and of Jesus' childhood and early manhood.

There were at least two advantages to Jesus' being brought up in Nazareth.

1. It was a quiet town, small and of little fame, readymade for a close community and neighbourliness and for quiet contemplation.
2. It was also a town in touch with the modern life and world events of that day. Two of the major roads of the world passed within eyesight of the hills surrounding the city: the road that stretched between Rome and northern Africa (North and South) and the road that ran between the great cities of the East and West. Jesus can be imagined standing on the hills observing (perhaps even meeting) some of the travellers and caravans using the major routes as they criss-crossed the world. He had opportunity to observe and study the nature and dealings of all kinds of men and all kinds of nationalities as they used the major routes. As a child, how often His heart must have ached and wept over a world lost who needed to be found. □

II. *Luke 1:27 The Virgin Mary*

Mary was pure, a virgin. She had never been touched by a man, not immorally. This is unmistakably and clearly stated. She confirmed the fact herself (v. 34).

1. The argument that the Hebrew word *alma* means a young woman who could have a questionable character is weak (Isa. 7:14). When a Hebrew spoke of a young woman (*alma*) he meant virgin. This is clear when the word *alma* is studied. The word is used six times in the Bible, always referring to a young woman with pure character.
 - Rebekah, the young woman, was certainly a virgin (Gen. 24:43). The whole context verifies the point.
 - Miriam, the young sister of Moses, was also pointed to as a virgin by the context (Exo. 2:8).
 - Young women of pure character were those who were worthy to participate in the worship of God (Psa. 68:25).

- The young women who were worthy of Solomon's love were not of impure character (Song of Sol. 1:3).
- There were young women who were compared with queens and concubines (Song of Sol. 6:8).
- The maiden (young woman) of Proverbs was contrasted with the adulterous women (Prov. 30:19-20).

In view of the heavy weight of this argument, the logical translation of *alma* is virgin. Of course, the virgin birth does not rest on this argument. However, we need to realize that unbelief snatches at every little gnat, trying its best to add every thing it can to disprove the divinity of Christ.

Thought 1 Man desperately needs to turn from his unbelief and to trust Christ with all his heart. There is little time left for any of us.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Heb 9:27 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

2. Mary was espoused to Joseph. Being espoused was something like an engagement, except it was more binding. It lasted one year. Two matters are important in discussing Mary's virginity.
 - a. In the espousal period sexual contact was adultery and resulted in stoning.
 - b. The espousal was so serious a matter that if it were broken a divorce had to be secured.
3. Mary and Joseph were both godly, so godly that God could choose them to be the parents of His Son. It was impossible that God would have chosen an immoral man and woman to bear and rear His Son, not when He had the power to control the events.

Thought 1 There are two striking lessons in the purity of Mary.

- 1) God expects both women and men to be sexually pure, untouched by a man or woman until they are married.
- 2) God is looking for pure women and men to use in the ministry of the gospel and in meeting the desperate needs of the world.

1 Th4:3-4, 7 *It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.*

Eph 5:3 *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.*

1 Tim 5:22 *Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.*

Titus 2:3-5 *Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*

Mat 5:27-28 *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

Rev 14:4 *These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb.*

LUKE 01: 27 VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

*To a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. **Luke 01:27***

In looking at the virgin birth of Christ, man needs to think deeply and honestly. Both are necessary: man must be honest, and he must engage in concentrated thought. One question needs to be asked. Why would God's Son have to enter the world through a virgin? Or more simply put, why was Christ born of a virgin? Why was a virgin birth necessary? (Note: Mary confirmed that she was a virgin, v. 34.)

1. The birth of God's Son required a miracle. He could not be born through the natural process as other men are. If He had been born as other men, His very birth would indicate that He was no more than mere man. Very simply, any person who enters the world through a man and a woman is a mere man or a mere woman. He or she can be nothing more. But this is not so with Christ. Christ already existed. Therefore, if God willed to send His Son into the world, He would have to choose another way. All Christ needed was a body. As He Himself said to God the Father: "A body you prepared for me" (Heb. 10:5).
2. The birth of God's Son required a combined act on God's part and on woman's part. If God's Son was to become a man and identify with men, He had to come through the process of conception through a woman. Why? Because man can only come through the woman. Therefore, if God willed to send His Son into the world as a man, He would have to perform a miracle, causing Mary to conceive by an act of His divine power.

Thought 1. A question needs to be asked. Why is it so hard to believe that God can cause Mary to miraculously conceive? Why is it so hard to believe that God exists and that, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16)?

Thought 2. Just imagine what science can do in the fertilization of female eggs today. Is God not able to do so much more? How foolish our unbelief causes us to act. The problem is not God, but our faith: “For nothing is impossible with God” (Lk. 1:37; 18:27. See Heb. 11:6, which is a warning to all.)

3. The birth of God's Son required a miraculous nature — both a divine nature and a human nature.

=> He had to be born of a woman to partake of human nature. (Heb. 2:14-18.)

=> He had to be born by a miraculous act of God so as not to partake of man's corruption. This was critical if we are to escape corruption and live forever. Think about it. Our faith must be in an incorruptible Saviour if we are to be covered by His incorruption. God had to identify with us by becoming one with us and by conquering our depraved and doomed nature. (See *Birth of Jesus Christ, Son of God*, Mt. 1:16).

4. The birth of God's Son required the birth of a perfect nature. Why? Because a perfect life needed to be lived. Righteousness, that is, perfection, needed to be secured. An Ideal Life (that is, a perfect, righteous life) had to be lived so that it could stand for and cover all men in perfection and in righteousness. Honest thought confesses that no man has been or is perfect. Man comes short. His *coming short* of God's glory is tragically pictured in the ultimate fate of life: death.

But God acted. God did everything to secure righteousness and perfection for man. He took every step and performed every act necessary to save His people from their sins and from death. He did it from beginning to end, from birth to exaltation. God sent His Son into the world, not through a man and a woman but through a miraculous act of His own upon the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ was thereby the God-Man. This says at least four things.

- a. As God-Man, Christ was able to consummate both the human and divine. He had the capacity and innate power not to sin (See *Birth of Jesus Christ, Son of God*, Mt. 1:16). Therefore His Godly nature empowered Him to live righteously, never doing wrong and always choosing and doing right (Heb. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21). By living a sinless life, Christ was able to secure righteousness, the Ideal Righteousness, that will cover and stand for all men.

- b. As God-Man, Christ was also able to bear the sins and the judgment of sin for all men. When He died, He died as the Perfect and Ideal Man. Therefore, His death is able to cover and stand for all men.
 - c. As God-Man, Christ was able to arise from the dead. Note the phenomenal words: “regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 1:3-4). He lived a perfect and holy life by which He became the Perfect and Ideal Man; therefore, His resurrection covers and stands for every man.
 - d. As God-Man, Christ was exalted to sit at the right hand of the Father — to live eternally in the heavenly dimension of being, in God's very own presence. As the Perfect and Ideal Man, His exaltation into the heavenly or spiritual dimension is able to blaze the path into heaven for every man. He is the forerunner to heaven for every man (Heb. 6:20). His exaltation as the Ideal Man covers and stands for the exaltation of every man.
5. The birth of God's Son required the creative Word of God. God created the world by simply speaking the Word. God always creates by the power of His Word and the power of His Word alone. Therefore, when God chose...
- to create a body for His Son, He created that body by simply speaking the Word (Heb. 10:5).
 - to send His Son into the world, He sent His Son by simply speaking the Word.

It is the same with the new birth or the recreation of man's spirit. It is by the Word of God, God's simply speaking the Word, that man is born again. The act of the spiritual birth, of the recreation, is not seen, felt or touched. Nothing physical happens, but the recreation does occur. *It occurs by the Word of God* (see 1 Pet. 1:23).

6. The birth of God's Son required the virgin birth because Christ is the *one and only* Son of God. He possesses all the nature and fullness of God Himself (Phil. 2:6-7; Co1. 2:9). Therefore, His birth had to be different. He had to enter the world differently from others, for He is different by the very nature, of His being. He had to enter the world in such a way as to proclaim His divine nature, yet in such a way that would allow Him to partake of human nature. This is critically important. His birth had to involve both the act of mankind and of God Himself. Why? Because the Son of God had to be proclaimed to be the Son of God.

=> There is no salvation apart from His *being* the Son of God.

=> There is no salvation apart from His being *proclaimed* to be the Son of God.

Man can be saved only if the Son of God *is*, only if He exists, and only if He is *proclaimed*. The Son of God must *exist*, and we must *hear* of Him if we are to be saved. He and His message are both essential. His virgin birth proclaims Him to be the *one and only* Son of God, the only Son sent into the world by the direct and miraculous intervention of God.

7. The birth of God's Son required a second Adam, a second man.

- born just like the first Adam, by the Word of God using natural substance.
- born to become what the first Adam failed to become: the Representative Man, the Ideal Man, the Pattern, the Perfect One in whom all men could find their Representative, their Ideal, their Pattern, their Perfection.
- born to be what Adam failed to be: the Man who always chose to love and obey God in all things, thereby passing on the nature of the ideal righteousness and perfection that can stand for and cover all men.
- born to become what the first Adam failed to pass on to man: the Way to God, the Truth of God, and the Life of God which all men can trust and follow (Jn. 14:6).
- born to offer what the first Adam failed to pass on to man: the nature of righteousness and life, both life abundant and life eternal (see Rom. 5:15-19; Jn. 10:10).

8. The birth of God's Son required an espoused state, and not a single or married state. Why?

=> Because a single woman would, cause far more questioning and heap far more contempt upon Christ and His followers.

=> Because a married woman would not be a virgin and God's Son had to be born of a virgin as indicated by the points above.

The espoused state provided the ideal marital relationship for God to use in sending His Son into the world (see Lk.1:27). The fact that Jewish society was using the espoused relationship as a preparation for marriage shows how God was preparing the world for the coming of His Son. (See *Fullness of Time*, Ga1. 4:4.)

Ga1 4:4 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.* □

MATHEW 01: 16
BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD

*And Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. **Mathew 01:16***

Note the changed expression from “the father of”. Jesus was born of Mary but not of Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary, but Jesus was not born of Joseph. He was born of the Holy Spirit through Mary.

This stresses a vital fact: Jesus was not born of a man, but of the Holy Spirit. He was Divine, yet human through His conception in Mary. He was God-Man, fully God and fully man. The real significance of this is that as God, He had the *capacity not to sin*. No other man since Adam has ever had this capacity, for all other men have had a human father and human mother, a father and mother contaminated with a sinful human nature. Therefore, the child of a man is born with the same nature, a nature that *cannot help but sin*. However Jesus Christ, as the only begotten Son of God born of the Holy Spirit, had the capacity to live a perfect and righteous life. He had the capacity never to sin.

However, Jesus Christ, as man, also had the capacity to sin. He suffered the pull and strain and suffering of temptation as all men do. He could have *willed* to sin. (Jn. 6:38.)

But there is this glorious difference. He utilized the capacity never to sin. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered (Heb. 5:8). He never gave in to temptation; He never sinned (2 Cor. 5:21). Thereby He became the Perfect and Ideal Man in whom all men find their salvation. □

GALATIANS 04: 04 FULLNESS OF TIME

*But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law. **Galatians 04:04***

The coming of Christ upon the world scene was not by chance. His coming was under the strategic timing providentially set by God. His coming was not one day before or behind the appointed time (see Mk. 1:15). A child who is placed under the control of guardians is under their control until “the time set by his father” (Gal. 4:2). God and God alone decided the fullness of time for the coming of Christ. Christ was born of a particular person, at a particular time, in a particular way (incarnation), and under a particular system (the law). He shared the frustration and agony of being subjected to the very system from which He came to save men. The world had been wonderfully prepared for His coming.

1. The law had done its educational work. It had shown through the Jewish nation that men are terrible transgressors and despite all of God's favour and blessings, men still failed to worship God in love. The world now had a picture of the depraved heart of man. (See Rom. 3:10-18.)
2. The world was full of people spiritually starved. The worship of self, pleasure, gods and philosophical ethics — all had left many empty and barren. The soul was now ready to have its hunger met.
3. The world was at peace under Roman rule. The world was an open door for the spread of the gospel — without any restraint.
4. The world spoke Greek as a basic language, making communication possible with many from all over the world.
5. The world had a system of roads for mass travel which allowed Christian missionaries to reach the farthest parts of the earth. It also brought commercial travellers to metropolitan centres where Christian believers were concentrated.

Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Gal 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.

1 Tim 2:6 Who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.

Titus 1:3 And at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour.

Heb 9:26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. □

III. *Luke 01:28 God's Favour towards Mary*

Mary was highly favoured by God. Three simple, yet meaningful, things were said to Mary.

1. She was to be highly favoured by God. Note the angel did not immediately tell Mary how she was to be favoured by God, that she was God's choice to bear and to be the mother of the Messiah. That came later in the conversation. The angel had to give her time to adjust to the shock of his spectacular appearance. For right now, he simply announced that she was to be highly favoured by God — *a unique privilege*.

Thought 1. Just think! God does favour us: He saves us, gifts us, uses us. We are favoured by the God of the universe — a phenomenal privilege and an awesome responsibility to make ourselves available to receive His favours.

2. The Lord was also with Mary. She did not walk through life alone. God was with her. Mary's life had pleased God to the point that He could favour her and be with her. She allowed God to walk with her and look after her life, so God was able to be with her. This means that God...
 - *had been* with her (past)
 - *was* with her (present)
 - *would be* with her (future)

No matter where Mary had to walk or what she had to do, God promised to be with her.

IV. Luke 1:29–30 Mary's Deep Humility

Mary was very human. She was both troubled and stricken with fear. The fear was understandable, for an angelic being from God stood before her. He stood in all the dazzling splendour that is necessary to reveal that he was truly from God. The fact that Mary was greatly troubled needs to be briefly considered.

1. Mary was “greatly troubled at his words,” at what the angel told her. It was the message that caused her to be troubled, the fact that...
 - she was highly favoured
 - the Lord was with her

Thought 1 Since Christ has come, every person can now...

- be highly favoured by God
 - have the Lord's presence
2. Mary was troubled because she did not understand how God could so greatly favour a person like herself. She never expected to be greatly favoured by Him. This was deep humility. Mary was not a proud, self-centred, flighty or frivolous young lady who was conscious of herself or felt that she merited and deserved the attention of others. She was a young lady who loved God and had determined to live a pure and responsible life. Apparently, from her response throughout this passage, she had a sweet spirit that was full of softness, warmth, and tenderness, and was responsive and willing, subjective and giving, thoughtful and kind. However, Mary never dreamed she was anyone special. Therefore, when she heard that God was to favour her and use her in a very special way, she was troubled. How could she, so ordinary and humble, do anything special for God? What a striking example Mary was!

James 4:6 *But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

Isa 66:2 *"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."*

Psa 138:6 *Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.*

V. **Luke 1:31–33 The Divinity of Jesus Christ**

Mary was told by the angel how she was to be favoured by God. She was to bear and be the mother of the Messiah. Note three startling and profound facts about Mary's Son...

1. *His name.* Mary was actually told what she was to name the Messiah: Jesus (See *Jesus*, Lk. 1: 31)
2. *His great person.*
 - a. He was to be called the Son of the Most High. The Highest, of course, is God. Therefore, Jesus is the Son of God, that is, of the very nature of God. He is "God over all, forever praised! Amen" (Rom. 9:5).
 - b. He was to be the Son of David and was to receive the throne of David. He was of the line of David. This indicates that Mary was a descendant of David; therefore, Christ Himself would become a descendant of David (See *Jesus Christ, Son of David*, Lk. 1: 32-33).
3. *His eternal kingdom.* Jesus was to teach that His kingdom would not be of this earth, for nothing on this earth lasts (Jn. 19:36). Therefore, the kingdom was to be spiritual, by which it would be eternal.

LUKE 01: 32–33 JESUS CHRIST, SON OF DAVID

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." Luke 01:32-33

Christ is the Son of David, a descendant of David. Note two things.

1. Christ is to reign upon the throne of David. But it will not be the people who will give Him the throne. They will not allow Him to rule over them. The throne will be given to Him by God. God will be the One to place Him upon the throne and give Him the rule over the people (see Mt. 1:1).

2. The promise of ruling over the house of Jacob and of possessing a kingdom forever apparently has both a literal and a spiritual meaning, both a temporal and eternal meaning. □

LUKE 1:31 JESUS (IESOUS)

Jesus means Saviour; He will save. The Hebrew form is Joshua (yasha), meaning Jehovah is salvation or He is the Saviour. The idea is that of deliverance, of being saved from some terrible disaster that leads to destruction (see Jn. 3:16). (See Lk. 9:23; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 2:14-18; 7:25.) □

VI. *Luke 1:34–35 The Reaction of Mary*

Mary was expected to believe the miraculous, but she was puzzled. She was not doubting or distrusting the message. She was not asking for some sign or proof like Zechariah (v. 18). She was simply asking for more information. She was single and had never known a man sexually. How would she possibly bear a child without knowing a man? Note exactly what is said about her conception.

1. “The Holy Spirit will *come upon you*.” The thought *is not after* the manner of men, but *after the manner* of God's Spirit. What is the manner or operation of God's Spirit? God's Spirit sets apart and activates, creates and recreates by *the Word of God*. God's Spirit simply speaks and it is done. There is no such idea as a *crude mating* between the Holy Spirit and Mary. God's Spirit simply speaks and it is done, no matter what is to be done. (How foolish are the *crude thoughts* and unbelief of men!)
2. “The power of the Most High [God] will overshadow you.” God Himself was going to look after the whole matter. The child's conception and growth during pregnancy and His birth and life were under the shadow and wing of Almighty God. It was God's power that saw to the whole operation, not the presence or power of an angel or of a man or of any other creature.
3. The child born of Mary would be holy, “the Son of God.” Note the most critical point: who “the Son of God” is.
=> He is “the holy One” born by the power and the Word and the will of God through the virgin Mary.
=> He is “the holy One”: “God sent his Son, born of a woman” by His power, Word, and will (Gal. 4:4).

Thought 1. Believers are to believe the miraculous.

Mat 17:20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Mark 9:23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

VII. **Luke 1:36–37 The Power of God**

Mary was encouraged to believe that "nothing is impossible with God." God encouraged Mary with two *impossible* facts.

1. The news that her sister Elizabeth, who was beyond child-bearing age, had conceived a son in her old age and was six months pregnant. The fact that God could take her sister in her old age and cause her to conceive demonstrated God's power. Visiting Elizabeth would encourage Mary.
2. With men everything is not possible. To say that all things are possible with men is far from the truth. When Mary heard and meditated upon the simple statement, "all things are possible with God," she was bound to be encouraged. The statement was simple and striking. It could be easily remembered and understood.

Thought 1. God expects us to believe Him and His power, regardless of circumstances and our feelings of insignificance.

Mat 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Job 42:2 "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted."

Psa 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

VIII. **Luke 1:38 The Complete Surrender of Mary**

Mary was submissive. Her response was immediate and brief, only one short sentence, yet it was striking and meaningful.

1. The word "servant" (*doule*) means slave-girl. Mary was saying that she was a bond-slave, willing to sell herself out completely to God. She would possess herself no longer but would give herself completely to God.

2. God's Word was her will. She surrendered totally to obey God. She would serve as He willed, being completely obedient and fulfilling His purpose entirely. She would act and do exactly what God had said.

Imagine what Mary was saying, the enormous depth of her trust and dedication to God.

1. There was the idea of being an unwed mother (Lk. 1:26f; Mt. 1:18). Who of that day would ever believe Mary's story? Required was a willingness to be available to God regardless of the price.
2. There was Joseph's discovery of her pregnancy (Mt. 1:19). The shock of broken trust and of personal embarrassment were more than a person could be expected to bear (Mt. 1:20). Required was a willingness on Joseph's part to forget self completely.
3. There was the threat of being condemned to death because of adultery (Deu. 22:23f). She had to face the possibility of being stoned because she would appear to be immoral (see Jn. 8:5).

Thought 1. Surrender to God is an absolute essential both for salvation and service.

Mat 12:50 "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Lk 14: 33 "In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

1 John 2:17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Psa 40: 8 "I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

Psa 143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Prov 23:26 My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways. ■