

12.20.20 A4 Mary DID Know, and Now So Do We

- For some years now there has been a popular, little Christmas song with a wistful melody. That song is “Mary Did You Know?”
- Some of the lyrics include: “Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water? Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?”
- And as it does on, the song asks if Mary knew that Jesus would give sight to the blind, calm a storm, make the deaf hear, the lame leap, the speechless speak, or rule the nations as the great I AM
 - Many singers have recorded this song, and “Mary Did You Know?” gets played a lot through streaming and radio
 - But the song also gets more than its share of eye-rolls
- Many people, especially some women pastors that I know, want to stand up and shout every time that they hear it, that MARY DOES KNOW a lot more than what the song gives her credit for!
 - So WHAT DOES Mary know?
 - Today, we hear in the gospel reading that instead of an angel announcing to a wealthy woman, or instead of announcing to a woman like Elizabeth who was married to a religious leader, that the angel Gabriel announced THIS to Mary, an ordinary young girl: “... you will conceive in your 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. [Luke 1:31-33]”
 - And if that were not enough, the angel then went on to say even more about this child to whom she would give birth: “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.* [1:35]”
- If we take the gospel of Luke seriously, in fact if we take Mary herself seriously, Gabriel did not give her the details like walking on water or healing the deaf, blind, or lame
 - BUT, Mary DOES KNOW A LOT – she knows from the very beginning that her son’s name JESUS, means “God saves.”

- She also knows from the angelic announcement that he will be called the Son of the Most High, and that he will be nothing less than the Holy Son of God.
- Now when Jesus later grew up, we like to remember that he called the fishermen – Peter, Andrew, James and John – we like to remember that Jesus called these fishermen to be his very first disciples
 - BUT we so easily forget that years before, when Jesus was soon to be born, that GOD CALLED MARY, and then Joseph, not just to be parents, but to be obedient and faithful disciples of the Son of God, the Son of the Most High God
 - First Mary, and then Joseph – THEY were really the first disciples called by God
 - And in addition, after Gabriel announced God’s promise to her, Mary went to visit her older, and also divinely pregnant cousin Elizabeth
 - And when Elizabeth saw Mary, the older Elizabeth humbled herself before the younger Mary because Elizabeth *and* the child within her with prophetic insight recognized in that Holy encounter, that Mary was *the mother of their Lord*
 - And then with Elizabeth large with child standing by in awe and wonder, Mary broke out in prophetic song
 - Mary’s song of praise magnifies, or sings the praises of the greatness of the Lord, and in her song of praise, young newly pregnant Mary understands the earthshaking impact of the Kingdom of God better than we do most of the time
 - The child that she was carrying would be the Son of God who would turn the world upside down in the coming realm of God – an upside down kingdom where *the servants* are blessed, and a realm where the proud, the mighty, and the rich are NOT favored, and instead the faithful, the lowly, and the hungry are lifted up and favored by God
- Yes, MARY KNEW QUITE A LOT, and as the first disciple of Jesus, and as a prophet with a song of truth, she tells us so that we may know too – Mary sang so that we may know that her son IS THE SON of God, and HE IS THE ONE who turns the world

upside down... and as the gospel story unfolds, this one, Jesus, even turns a dreaded cross into an instrument of forgiveness and life – not for the proud and sinless, but for everyone who needs the free gift of God’s forgiving and life-giving love.

- And we... we are certainly among those who need the gift of God’s forgiving and life-giving love demonstrated in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Savior, who is the Son of the God Most High

- So now, let us listen with our ears, and sing in hearts, Mary’s song of her son – the son of praise for God’s Son, who in his Kingdom conquers sin and death, and turns both our lives, and the order of the world upside down... [sing Mary’s Magnificat, ELW 251 immediately!]