***Luke 1:38 Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.***

This morning, we’re with Mary as she receives the revelation that she will bear the Messiah from the angel Gabriel. Now, we’ve met Gabriel before. We met him when he spoke to Zacharias concerning John the Baptist, but we also heard from him in Daniel 580 years earlier. Gabriel stands before the very face of God. Mary, a young woman quite probably in her teens at this time, receives the revelation starting with these words, “*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”* Are there any sweeter words we could hear than those? I think not. You have found favor with God.

 The last three weeks we’ve talked about agreeing with God. We found out that two cannot walk together unless they are agreed. Abram trusted God, not knowing where he was going, but trusting Who was leading. Jesus was obedient to God, in the darkest times this world has ever known, and said, “Nevertheless Lord, not My, but Your will be done.” Now, we’re with Mary, in Nazareth of Galilee, as she sets an example for us in agreement with God.

 Verse 38 starts *Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord!* Immediate submission to the Lord. Gabriel has announced the end of Mary’s comfort and ease, taking her from known to unknown, making her a subject of derision and judgement. She will never be the same, yet Mary immediately submits. She does not know everything that will happen, but she knows Who is in control… like Abram, like Jesus… she trusts the Who, because the Who, God Almighty, is eternally trustworthy.

 Do we wake each morning with this level of submission to the Lord Jesus? Behold, the male servant, the maid servant of the Lord. Submission to God starts in agreement with God. We cannot be in rebellion against God and expect to be used mightily by God. Whatever You desire Jesus, I am Your servant.

 The verse finishes – *Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.* Let it be to me according to your word… Nevertheless Lord, not My, but Your will be done. Notice the strong resemblance of these two. Complete submission. Voluntary trusting, obedient surrender. No argument, no counter idea, surrender. Mary spent no time telling God how this may ruin her life, making her less upwardly mobile, or restricting her ability to have fun. God announced her ministry, invited her to be part, and she accepted… because she knew Who He is.

 In Matthew 6:33, we read - *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* Are we seeking first the kingdom of God? Are we waking like Samuel in 1 Sam 3:10, when God calls, saying, “*Speak, for Your servant hears”*? Do we respond like Isaiah in Isaiah 6:8 when God asks Whom shall I send and who will go for us, “*Here am I, send me.*” When we are truly seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness, worldly things lose their appeal, our ease takes a back seat, our everyday becomes a refrain of Here am I, send me… Your servant hears… Let it be to me according to Your will… Nevertheless, not My, but Your will be done. And we depart, because we know Who we serve. We may depart across the street or across the globe… we may be called to speak with millions or just one… we may be called to leave our high paying, world traveling job to come and pastor a church or may be called to pastor in our workplace… the question is – are we in agreement with God, submitted, surrendered, ready to sacrifice our all for His glory?

 In Luke 1:46-55, we find the Song of Mary. It’s a song of praise! She praises before she sees how everything works out, before that night in Bethlehem, before the manger, before the wise men, and before the flight to Egypt to escape Herod. She praises because she trusts God and leans not to her own understanding. She praises because she is walking in Faith through all the things she cannot see; because her relationship with God is all consuming, more important than status, jobs, or even her own life. Surrendered, submitted, willing to sacrifice. Listen to verses 46-48 *And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.* My soul magnifies the Lord, though I have just departed on this journey, and I don’t know where it will lead. Sounds an awful lot like Abram, departing his country. Sounds like Trust. Sounds like her Son Jesus, kneeling in obedience to the plan of God, even as the murderous mob approached the garden. *Nevertheless, not My, but Your will be done.*

 This week, let’s consider how we are agreeing with God’s plan. We’re given the opportunity to participate… not in the planning, but the execution. His plan is perfect and precious. He’s graciously called each of us to take part, but we must be in agreement with Him. Rebellion will not work. He doesn’t ask our opinion, but our obedience. May we, like the great servants of old, wake each morning, crying to the heavens – Behold Your servant O’ God! Where You lead, let me follow and what You say, let me do. The ministry to which God calls each of us differs, but it has only one reasonable answer – *Here am I Lord, send me*.