

DELIVERANCE FROM FEAR

#2 Fear of the Impossible

Read Luke 1:26-38

- Mary was probably only young
- She was certainly unknown, insignificant
- She was given an impossible commission
- So Gabriel says, ‘Do not be afraid!’

1. Fear of the Impossible

- It is easy to be fearful when we are confronted with the impossible
- But the impossible may only be impossible *so far*
- People have often given in too easily to the impossible
- ‘There is no likelihood man will ever tap the power of the atom’ – Dr Robert Millikan, 1923 Nobel Prize winner
- ‘Very interesting, my boy, but it will never work’ – a Cambridge Professor when shown Frank Whittle’s plan for jet engine
- ‘Radio has no future’ – Lord Kelvin 1895
- ‘Heavier than air flying machines are impossible’ – Lord Kelvin
- Speaking in Adelaide in 1987 concerning the possibility of his daughter, whose leg was amputated, walking again, Robert Schuller said – ‘Tell me it can’t be done yet, if you like, but don’t tell me it’s impossible!’
- In the film *The Princess Bride*, when confronted by the terrible Fire Swamp, Buttercup says, ‘We’ll never survive.’ But Westley replies, ‘Nonsense – you’re only saying that because no one ever has.’
- Jesus frequently reminds us that, by faith, the impossible is possible (eg Matthew 17:20)

2. The Grace of God

- Miracles are not based on worth or deserving.
- Verse 28: Mary was ‘highly favoured’ (= ‘graced’)
- Verse 30: She ‘found favour’ (= ‘grace’) with God

Grace has nothing to do with our merit or virtue – it is based only on the generosity of the giver.

3. The Word of God

- Mary was confronted with the impossible - but she believed it (Luke 1:30-37).
- Literally verse 37 reads, ‘For not powerless from God every word...’ It is God’s Word which makes the impossible possible.
- An encouraging word for women—‘Blessed is she who believes...’ (1:45)
- Are you faced with an impossible situation? You need a word from the Lord!
- Has God given you a word to cover temptation; powerlessness; sickness; sin; fear; despair; criticism; temptation; opposition at home; provision for enrolment at Bible College; to serve as a missionary...?

Freedom from Fear – Fear of the Impossible

- What promise can you claim to meet your need? (eg 1 Cor 10:13 to cover temptation)
- Oscar C. Eliason wrote the song ‘Got any Rivers?’ after he nearly died of late stage TB in a sanitarium in Minneapolis. His brother Paul had died a few days before when a humble minister came by to pray for the sick. Miraculously, Eliason, whose right lung had already collapsed, began to heal. He was restored to health and became a pastor and song writer. He took the old Panama Canal slogan, ‘Got any rivers?..’ and changed it and wrote a melody for it. This chorus took off and also has been sung in many languages over the years.

“Be of good courage," God spake unto Joshua,
 When o'er the river God pointed the way;
 Jordan uncrossable! things seemed impossible,
 Waters divide as they march and obey.
*Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?
 Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?
 God specializes in things thought impossible,
 He does the things others cannot do.*
 Battles to win! they would meet with their obstacles,
 Jericho's walls, too, must fall to the ground;
 God never failed - He stood back of His promises,
 Walls had to crumble as they marched around.
 God is the same and His Word is dependable,
 He'll make a way through the waters for you;
 Life's situations by Him are amendable;
 Mountains and hills He will part for you too.

4. Faith in God

- Note Mary's response (38)—‘let it be to me according to your word.’
- Mary believed and obeyed
- If God gives us a ‘word’ let’s believe it, even if it is impossible
- It is not a question of whether it is possible or not – but whether it is right. If it is God’s will it is possible!
- Charles Wesley, ‘*Faith mighty faith the promise sees,
 And looks to that alone;
 Laughs at impossibilities,
 And cries, It shall be done!*’
- If we can believe, all things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23)
- When we step out, God steps in!

Challenge

- Are we being held back by fear?
- Unable to believe that God could do the impossible?
- That he could change us and make us new?
- Empower us to fulfil God's calling?
- Supply our needs?
- Like Mary, let's believe God today and trust His Word

SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT

Remember: You don't have to answer all the questions. Choose those that seem most relevant to you at this time.

Read Luke 1:1-38

Biblical

1. How was it possible for Mary to conceive without a husband? (35)
2. List the things Gabriel prophesied about Jesus (30-35)
3. Which of these was, in your opinion, the most important? Why?
4. How and why was Jesus to be called the Holy One of God? (35) What are the implications for us?
5. Compare Luke 1:37 with Matthew 17:20. To what extent are they (a) similar and (b) different?

Personal and practical

6. Imagine you are Mary. What do you think *you* would have said and done when Gabriel appeared. Why?
7. What were the main features of Mary's response? (38, 45) What can we learn from them? You might also like to consider the *Magnificat* – the name given to Mary's song in 46-55. (In Latin, *magnificat* means 'it magnifies'.)
8. On a scale of one (little) to ten (much) where would you place yourself in regard to faith in God for the impossible?
9. What promises of God would you offer to someone with each of the following needs? (Do as many as you can.) – Addiction; grief; discouragement; pain; sickness; conflict with others; uncontrolled anger; lack of resources to serve God; sense of inferiority; loneliness; abandonment; bitterness; envy; pride; greed.
10. What is there in your life that you have previously dismissed as out of the question because it seemed impossible – and that maybe you could rethink as being possible after all, if it is the will of God.

Memorise – Luke 1:37-38

About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

Terms of Use

This material is not for sale. You are free to download and reproduce it for personal use or for free distribution to groups such as your local church Bible study group or Christian fellowship. Please include the following acknowledgement:

‘This study is copyright © Barry Chant 2006. Reproduced with permission from www.barrychant.com.’

This study is one of a series of 4 studies on this theme. The rest can be found at www.barrychant.com.