

Me?

A Christmas Reflection

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At the graduation ceremony of 110 students from Costa Rica's ESEPA (*Evangelical Seminary for Pastoral Education*) on December 13, where RREACH has established a Chair of Biblical Preaching and Pastoral Ministries (our second), I spoke about Virgin Mary's incredible responses to the Angel's announcement. Here's the gist of my Christmas talk, which God used deeply. You may respond similarly as well.

Mary, the virgin mother of our Lord Jesus, didn't know she was participating in a Christmas Bible text! Her responses to the Angel's recruiting trip to earth sets a life-long pattern for our servant-availability to God's plans for this planet. Read Luke 1:26-38 to see if Mary's reactions are familiar to your heart.

Who Me? (vs. 26-29)

A humble surprise was Mary's response to the angelic "hail, favored one." Though deeply agitated, she acknowledged her own insignificance before God's grace. She would be the recipient, the beneficiary of a grace-appointment by God for His purposes.

Would you consider your life as an appointment of undeserved grace? Not only is God's salvation by grace; not only is your spiritual growth by grace; but your service for Him is by grace too. If we forget God's grace as the basis of ministry appointment, we can become too big for God to use. Let Mary's humble surprise never leave your heart.

How me? (vs. 30-34)

Earlier Zacharias the aging father of John, though he had Abraham for a precedent, asked the "how me?" question out of unbelief. Instead Mary, without a historical precedent, raised her "how me?" question only about the process: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (v. 34). She realistically admitted her personal limitation in view of God's expectations from her.

Recognizing personal limitations must not preclude a strong trust in the God who gives you an assignment, for in your inadequacy is the growing realization that ministry is *about* God, and yet it is *through* you.

Yes me! (vs. 35-38)

Mary's question marks turned into an exclamation point. The angel lifted Mary's perspective: the humanly impossible will not stifle the omnipotence of God. Almost nothing is possible for us, but every thing is possible with Him.

Our only response to the call of God, for our role in His plan should resemble Mary's "Here am I, the servant of the Lord." God wants you to go beyond your acknowledgement of insignificance, and admission of inadequacy, to abandonment to His sovereign plans through you. Is your heart soft enough to resemble Mary's servant-availability for however God wants to use you?