

Outcast (1): There Was Something About Mary

(Luke 1)

I. Introduction to Outcast Series

- A. **Factoid:** Jesus got into trouble with religious establishment of His day
 - 1. **Question:** Reason to think He wouldn't be in same trouble today
 - a. He refused to toe-the-line of the religious traditions and institution
 - b. What happens when He makes hamburger out of our sacred cows?
 - 2. Zack Hunt suggests Jesus would stay in trouble in most churches
 - a. He wasn't always clear in His teaching; he always made you think
 - b. He was neither conservative nor liberal (ask Pharisees or Sadducees)
 - c. He was anti-materialistic (*can't get prosperity gospel from Jesus*)
 - d. He cared less about doctrine and theology than about how we live
 - 3. Most of all: Jesus accepts the unacceptable, fringe, outcast (**Lk 15:1-2**)
- B. Over the next 12 weeks, we'll look at the outcasts Jesus meets in Luke
 - 1. Luke is particularly interested because he is something of an outcast
 - a. Paul is a Hebrew of Hebrews; Luke is a Greek writing for Greeks
 - b. He writes as an outsider; he stresses Jesus with outsiders, outcasts
 - 2. Jack Lewis, one of my professors, called them "Luke's sinners"
 - a. He said we meet them on every street corner and every church
 - b. But most of all, we meet them every morning in the mirror
 - c. We are all outcasts and we all must come to Jesus "*Just as I am*"

II. There Is Something About Mary

- A. We begin our look at the outcasts in Luke at a strange place— Mary
 - 1. That might feel like a strange topic, since it's not at Christmas (*that will also feel a bit strange when we talk about the shepherd next week*)
 - a. Most of this series will be people that meet Jesus who are outcast
 - b. Jesus isn't born yet, but Mary is an outcast, and that's our doing
 - 2. There was a time when Mary was at the center of Christianity
 - a. Legend that became Cinderella before Brothers Grimm got it
 - b. Original story had Mary rescue the girl, not fairy godmother
 - c. Mary was replaced with a fairy godmother to secularize the story

3. **Problem:** Catholic theology stressed Mary a little too much
 - a. Mary was seen literally as “*Mary, Mother of God*” or *Theotokos*
 - b. In a practical, non-theological sense, she functioned as deity
 - 1) Catholics don’t pray to Mary; praying the rosary goes thru her
 - 2) If your mom asked a favor, would you do it? So would Christ
Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.
 - 3) Mary becomes intercessor for intercessor. Too much credit.
 - c. We don’t give Mary any credit, unless casting a nativity play
- B. Gospel story begins saying there’s something about Mary (**Lk 1:26-28**)
 1. Elizabeth is Mary’s relative and she’s also expecting (John Baptist)
 - a. We are told that Mary is pledged/betrothed to man named Joseph
 - b. And we’re told Mary is “*highly favored*” and “*Lord is with her*”
 2. There is something about Mary– notice her response (**Luke 1:29**)
 - a. How does one normally respond when one is visited by an angel?
 - 1) Next week, the angels show how it’s done– they are terrified
 - 2) At the beginning of Revelation, John fell down as though dead
 - 3) At the end of Revelation, John fell down to worship the angel
 - b. That’s the way you are supposed to act when you see an angel
 - 1) Not Mary; she’s troubled because she doesn’t get his greeting
 - 2) Mary takes it in stride because there’s something about Mary
- C. Goes on with his message to fill in the details to Mary (**Luke 1:30-33**)
 1. I do like the contemporary Christmas song *Mary Did You Know*
 - a. It has some very clever and power lines that can make us think
Mary did you know this Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.
 - b. It asks some things where you want to say, “*Yes, Mary knew!*”
 - 1) She knew she was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit
 - 2) She also knew that her son would be “*Son of the Most High*”
 - 3) She knew he would be the Messiah to sit on David’s throne
 - 4) She knows his reign and His kingdom will never come to end.
 - c. Gabriel told her all that. Did she know what it would mean for her?

2. What's her only objection to all of Gabriel's revelation? (**Luke 1:34**)
 - a. Is it that she can't believe that God can pull off a virgin birth deal? (*OK, giving birth to Messiah and mother to God's child, but virgin birth?*)
 - b. Or is this like God's promises to Abraham all going through son... (*Mary was like 14, she was engaged, had every prospect of having a child*)
 - c. No, Mary understands more about this whole deal than we realize
 - 1) Her objection is "But I haven't known a man." She's a virgin
 - 2) She's not questioning what God can do but what it means to her
 - d. From this part of the story on, there will be something about Mary
 - 1) From this point, this is the point that will be the point of story
 - 2) Mary is pure; she is a virgin; she wants that point on the table
3. And so does Gabriel, and so he makes that point clear (**Luke 1:35**)
 - a. Unlike most of God's men, Mary responds immediately (**Lk 1:38**)
 - b. Later she breaks into song we sang portion of earlier (**1:46-55**, NLT)
 - 1) Mary praises God for her honor; she proclaims good news for all
 - 2) Good news will make a hard life for Mary; makes her outcast
- D. We see that in Luke's Christmas story— or his tax season story (**2:4-5**)
 1. Mary decided to travel with Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem
 - a. Google Maps says it takes 34 hours to walk the 100 miles/163 km (*It didn't tell me how long it would take if 9 month pregnant on a donkey*)
 - b. Why did Mary go? Why not leave Mary safe at home with family
 2. What did Joseph think when discovered Mary pregnant (**Matt 1:19**)
 - a. Joseph was faithful to the law and didn't want public disgrace
 - b. The neighbors could count to 9 and recognize rushed weddings
 - 1) Unlike Joseph, neighbors would be all for a public disgrace!
 - 2) Gabriel didn't visit neighbors! Tongues would be wagging!
 - 3) A 100 mile donkey ride would seem like walk in the park
 3. We read this week or two ago on the scandal of cross (**Heb 12:2-3**)
 - a. How did He have strength to endure the cross and scorn its shame?
 - 1) He was the son of God— He got that strength from His father
 - 2) In scorning shame to seek God will, also took after His mother
 - b. There's something about Mary; made her both outcast and faithful

III. Conclusion

- A. I was reading a blog back before the first of the year (couldn't find it)
 - 1. It was back when people were musing over New Year's resolutions
 - a. Some resolutions that are safe— lose weight, exercise, save money
 - b. They are “safe” because we all make them... and break them
 - c. One guy was disappointed in trendy new Peloton exercise bike
“I can't hang nearly as much laundry on it as I could my old treadmill”
 - 2. Young writer of this blog said that her resolution was much riskier
 - a. She would let her friends and co-workers know she was Christian
 - 1) She would work Jesus and faith into her normal conversations
 - 2) She'd find the space to invite them to church activities/events
 - 3) She would let them know that her faith was important to her
 - b. She knew it may cost her friends and make her source of ridicule
 - 1) She knew that growing in faith meant that she scorn the shame
 - 2) She was ready to say with Mary, *“I am the Lord's servant”*
 - 3) She was ready even if it meant she might become an outcast
- B. We'll see a lot of outcasts that come into contact with Jesus in Luke
 - 1. They are broken and on the fringes in many and diverse ways
 - a. Some because they are seen as distrusted gypsies (shepherds)
 - b. Some because they are defiled and ritually unclean (lepers)
 - c. Some because they're despised, despicable foreigners (Centurion)
 - d. Some because they are dishonest and traitors (tax collectors)
 - 2. These and many more were outcasts before they came across Christ
 - a. Mary reminds us that coming to Christ that makes us outcasts
 - b. Her life was normal and proceeding well until Gabriel showed up
 - c. When she made herself available to God, everything changed
 - 1) Life became hard and complicated— she would become outcast
 - 2) Life would never be easy; but there was something about Mary
 - 3. God never promises that faith will make life easy for us as well
 - a. Faith may make us outcast; we scorn the shame, like Mary, Jesus
 - b. God can use us to bless others if we allow Him to truly take control