

Advent 4B 2008
Luke 1:26-38
Sermon for Advent LC
December 21st, 2008

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Here we are, on the verge of celebrating Christmas and today we experience Mary, her openness to God's will and the way that God comes and interrupts her life (Jim Harris Interrupt me). Thanks Jim, glad I could help but really I need to continue speaking here, I am sure the scrabble game can wait. Where I was I- oh yes, interruptions- Mary who was planning to be married to Joseph, had dreams of a wonderful wedding celebration, planning a happy life with the man she loved and all of a sudden out of nowhere comes this Angel Gabriel who blatantly interrupts her life and all she had planned. (Cherie interruption here) Where was I again? Oh yes, interruptions and Mary. Can you imagine Mary...and the shock she must have felt, the fear that overcame her at this announcement- I doubt she really knew what was going to happen, I doubt she even imagined that this child who was going to form inside of her was going to be the savior of the world. But that was the word from Gabriel, and Gabriel also brought a promise that Mary had found favor with God- she had been chosen, chosen to deliver the savior of the World- yes this was good news, but I don't know about you- I get bugged when I get interrupted in big ways or small ways, when I am trying to get something done and someone interrupts me with things- even if they are important I fret because so often I see the task I am trying to do as the most important- selfish perhaps, but interruptions have a tendency to bug me! (BecMac Interruption). Well as you can see, the theme for today is interruptions of our life- and though often times they are annoying little things, not always as funny and enjoyable as the ones right now- and sometimes they hinder the work we are trying to do sometimes I think interruptions often are a way that God works in our lives. How do you react when you feel God intruding on your life, calling you to do something that really will challenge you, change you, demand more of you? Are you open, or do you get annoyed? Mary's example is one of faith, and trust and she goes forward holding on to the hope of God being with her. That example is one I believe we must cling to as we live out our life of faith.

I have little Abbie Smith's words echoing in my head as I say that- doing something that seems so difficult. Once during a sermon she leaned over to her mom and said that's a lot easier to say than to do- and so it is with following the example of Mary. I mean let's be real- how many of you could put everything aside to follow the will of God- if it meant our life would never be the same. We'll come back to that- but first let's look at Mary's response. Before Mary plunges into the face of pregnancy and all it entails- morning sickness, hormonal unbalance, at least those were the things I was familiar with during Anna's pregnancies. She wonders how? How is this possible- I am virgin she challenges. Gabriel, in his calming presence simply reminds her "nothing is impossible with God". That proclamation is true to you also, God is working on everyone of you here today- God has brought you to this place to be part of this community, and now God calls you to listen to what he has to say. He says to you, embrace the coming of this Christ Child, which really can be an interruption on your life but who proves that All is possible through God, and who is the presence of God in our world. He says stand on all the promises that I have made to you, and remember that nothing, nothing is impossible with me. God sends his son to this world- that is the way it is, and we, like Mary have two options- to complain that it doesn't make sense or to embrace the promise that is Christ. Because here's the deal, when you embrace the coming of Christ into your life- and truly accept the calling to be a disciple- a faithful follower open to the calling of your Lord- your life will be interrupted, again and again and again- how do you respond?

Dear friends, God has called you all by name, and God continues to call you to have an openness to be willing to go where he may lead you and a willingness to be open to what God has in store for you. And coming back to that question from before- how many of can put everything else aside to give in to the complete calling of God- probably not many- and yet God continues to come to us, to stir in us, to expect us to go and so often we see this nudging, this calling, this expectation to hope in the face of hopelessness

and to bring hope to all other people as a meager interruption to our plan, and our life pushing God away too often. I think that if we truly wish to live the life of faith, and truly wish to open our lives to God's surprises and God's calling- we must let God interrupt us again and again and again. That's scary, that's hard but that's our calling. God is calling you, dear friends as people of hope, as people that belong to God, to take the message of Christ- the Christ child that breaks into the brokenness of our world, that is Good News, that brings peace where there is unrest, that brings calm where there are storms, that brings love to the loveless- you are the messengers you are the one's chosen- you are the one's God wants to interrupt and I pray that our response is as Mary's. She steps back for a moment and then in her response demonstrates a willingness to be open to God's will. She says, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

My hope and prayer for all of us is that in the midst of the hustle and bustle of this season, we will take the time to like Mary, be open to the interruption of God calling us to go and

- 1. **Stop** "*Here I am ...*"
- 2. **Surrender** "*...the servant of the Lord...*"
- 3. **Submit** "*...let it be with me according to your word.*"

Say it with me will you...repeat after me....here I am...the servant of the Lord....let it be with me according to your word..... Yeah- if you truly believe what you are saying, God will enter your world in a new and exciting way that you won't be able to ignore. The promise is made to you, what are you going to do with it? Be bold dear friends in your identity as a child of God and in your calling to go and share the promise of the Christ child.

God loves you and so do I. Amen.