

ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL, NAKASERO

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2017

THE MAGNIFICAT MARY (MARY'S HYMN OF PRAISE)

SERMON BY DR RUTH SENYONYI

MU Year of the Family Theme: Strengthen the Family: Build the Nation – Families of the Nation, Return to the Lord

Readings: Luke 1: 46- 55 and Psalm 24: 1-10

Theme of the Day: Family

Introduction:

There is a growing acceptance that families are falling apart, that divorce rates are going up and that couples are unhappy in their marriages. We talk about our children as a generation that does not listen to anyone and is being overtaken by drugs, alcohol pornography and technology. We are focusing on failure. Today I come with **hope** for families.

Facts: Many couples are happy (there are times when one feels disappointed or angry but that does not mean you are unhappy). Very few couples are divorced (its certainly not 50%). This generation when given the right attention is the future of our nation and there is a lot of potential given all the technology and the knowledge they have. HOPE....

Context of the texts

Story of two influential women: Mary a virgin (about 14 years) of unknown descent becomes pregnant; Elizabeth an old woman, barren for years was in her sixth month of pregnancy. All these are miracle stories and only possible because of God. What happened?

Influencing Families as Women of God

How do we as women in families change the face of families of the nation in today's world?

What are the lessons we can learn from these two women?

Mary

- ✓ A virgin (about 14 years of age)
- ✓ Visited by an angel Gabriel

Angel had pronounced the following:

- Mary was a **favoured** one (Explain favour in context of teacher/student)
- The Lord was with her
- Mary had found favour with God
- ✓ She was to conceive and bear a son, name him Jesus -He will be great and be called the Son of the Most High.

Favour: Need to note however that the favour also comes only when we too have done something about our lives This favour arises out of our relationship with God

Psalm 24: 3-5: ***Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the Lord.***

Question: what is your relationship with the Lord? Are you worthy to be favoured of God?

Mary was **still in shock** about the news of her pregnancy because she was betrothed and not yet married. The angel also told her that Elizabeth was in her sixth month of pregnancy. This was unbelievable but Mary chose to accept the news (I am the handmaid of the Lord- let it be to me as you have said) and proceeded to check it out with Elizabeth.

How do we become influential in our families, in our workplaces and to our children? Its not about good backgrounds, rich families, political places, who we are but Mary teaches us 3 things that form the foundation of becoming influential women of God.

THREE LESSONS FROM MARY

Lesson 1. : Humility of Mary

Luke 1 vs 48 : “has looked on the humble state of his servant “

Mary was in a lowly social position, no rich family, not known, no PhD's, but God chose her and gave her responsibility. She was given the task in order to lift up God and not herself.

Luke 14:11: “For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

James 4:10:“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

Mary recognizes that God has chosen her for a task and it was not because of who she was or what she owned. This realization immediately brings her to burst into song. “My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour (Halleluyah) - She is favoured and given the responsibility of bearing Christ. She does not exalt herself but exalts the Lord who has enabled her to be called blessed.

What is your background? (*How God chose me to become the President MU – its not because of my tribe, background or length of service in MU. How do we choose our leaders?*)

Examine yourself – humility, blessings and favour are important if you are to be chosen for God's business.

Lesson 2 : Mary Recognized God in all

Mary in her song describes God in every verse. It shows the depth of her knowledge of who He is. She has a deep and rich knowledge of God in her everyday life. She has the ability to recognize what God has done in her life and for her.

Mary's Description of God

My Saviour (vs. 47) Mighty (vs. 49), Holy (vs. 49), Merciful (vs. 50) Strong (vs. 51), Provider (vs. 53) Faithful.

Psalm 24: The earth is the Lord's – he has established it, He reigns and is sovereign.

Questions: Do you recognize the sovereignty of God in all your life ? Do you see God in all you do and in what happens to you? Can you sing and burst out in song describing God around all you do?

Story about my grandson, Muganzi- the Lord provided in a week ALL the requirements needed for the open heart operation.

Lesson 3: Mary was Dependent on God

Mary was given the task to bear the Son of God. She asked "How will that be since I am a virgin? Elizabeth must have asked the same question – how can it be? – am advanced in years (old). These women were going to bear children but they had no idea how it was to be done.

The angel said "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (vs 37) – "For nothing will be impossible with God" Gabriel assured Mary that she must depend on God for the impossible to happen.

Example: Can be tempted to trust in a rich man to take care of your troubles rather than depend on God,

Question: what has gone wrong in your home? What seems impossible in your life? Does your situation seem to be out of hand? Intending divorce, impossible children, single life and no spouse in sight? This is the time you turn to God and like Mary say

nothing will be impossible with God and that you are ***a servant of the Lord***, ***let it be to me according to His word.***

That is how you can influence your family.

Conclusion

Do you want to influence your family? Let humility take over. Learn to recognize God in everything you and learn to depend on him totally.

Take the three lessons and be blessed. Its your duty to strengthen the family and build the nation.