

HEIDI BAKER: Say Yes to God's Promises

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Have you ever had a prophetic word from God that was beyond what you could ask, think or imagine? God loves to blow up our little boxes. What price did you pay before the word came to pass?

The reason I ask is because many Christians eagerly desire the prophetic without having a clue what it will cost them. We want to receive a prophetic word. We don't realize the price.

How much will it cost to follow Jesus? Everything.

Just ask Mary.

Luke 1:26 tells us, "In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

"And the angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you'" (NIV).

What would you do if an angel showed up on your doorstep, proclaiming, "Greetings, you are highly favored"? Would you jump up and down saying: "Hooray! God is here"?

I don't think so. Perhaps you would fall on your face. You would tremble before the Lord. You would be wrecked, completely undone, ruined forever. With one look of His eyes, there is no turning back.

That was Mary's response. When the angel appeared, she wasn't overjoyed. She was terrified.

Luke 1:29-30 says, "Mary was greatly troubled at [the angel's] words and wondered what kind of a greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you've found favor with God.'"

I can identify with Mary. You see, when I was 16 years old, I had a radical visitation from God.

The Cost of an Encounter

I had been a Christian only five months when God spoke audibly to me. He told me that I would be a missionary and minister. He told me to go to Africa, Asia and England.

I was forever transformed. I alternated between sobbing and laughing. Then I began running after that prophetic vision with all my heart. Thirty years later, I'm still chasing after my God dreams.

I love running into the darkest of the darkness to see His glorious light shine forth. I have never looked to the right or to the left, or glanced back. I could not imagine doing anything but laying down my life for love's sake.

Why? Because He ruined me with His love. I promised Jesus, "I will do whatever you ask no matter the cost."

After that experience, I followed the word and began to preach the gospel. As a 16-year-old girl, I first preached to Alzheimer's patients, drug addicts—anyone who would listen. Eventually I preached in Asia and England and all over the world. Today I live and minister in Mozambique, Africa.

When God visited me and promised me something so much beyond myself, I had a choice. At the time, I had never even heard of women preachers. But I chose not to doubt and look to the natural. I believed His word. He told me to preach, so I preached. That word has cost me everything. But it is my greatest joy and privilege. There is nothing He could ever ask of me that I would not gladly give.

Over the years I have watched God do countless miracles. As I have laid my little life down, I am now watching a nation run to Him.

I have been shot at, thrown in jail, slandered, stabbed, diagnosed then healed of many terminal illnesses and experienced trials too great to tell.

My family has been without food, water or support. We have been beaten, threatened and had all manner of evil spoken against us. But this is nothing compared to the all-surpassing joy of knowing Him.

Jesus is my model and hero. He spared nothing and gave up the riches of heaven as the ultimate missionary. He came down to Earth just for us. Jesus was love incarnate. Every day, He poured forth limitless, unceasing love to each and every person in front of Him no matter the pain of it all.

Now our job on Earth is to follow His example, and love no matter the cost. No matter how impossible a prophetic word seems, we must follow the Lamb who was slain, to give Him the just reward for His sufferings. God challenges me every day to remain in love no matter the trials and tribulations.

Spiritual Abortion

The Lord spoke to me recently about the church and said, "No more abortions." No more aborting His promises or prophetic words.

No more aborting what God has placed inside us.

He told me to ask the church: "'Who will carry that which I've placed within them to full term? Who will allow Me to stretch them and break them and mold them and cause them to be inconvenienced? Who will allow Me to utterly transform their lives by the shape of the promise within them?'"

I hope and pray you will. I believe carrying a prophetic word

is like being pregnant with a baby: The way you walk, talk, move, everything is totally transformed. That has been my experience. It was Mary's experience too.

The angel told Mary that she was "highly favored." What did that mean? It meant that her life was about to get seriously hijacked by God.

The angel said: "Don't be afraid. Everything is going to be OK."

I can imagine Mary's response: "Sure, that's easy for you to say. You're an angel. I'm a virgin teenage girl.

"How am I going to explain this to my parents? How am I going to explain it to my fiancé? I can't just tell them, 'An angel came, and now I'm pregnant. Rejoice with me!'"

Could she have said no to God's plan? The answer depends on your theology. But let's assume that she had that option.

She could have said: "That's all very nice. You're an awesome-looking angel. You're terrifyingly beautiful.

"But I'm a virgin, and I don't like your good news. Please find another girl, and go tell your news to her."

That's how many of us respond when God shows up in our lives: "Find somebody else, please." Or we say, "Yes!" in the excitement of worship on Sunday. But then Monday comes. What happens when we find ourselves "pregnant" on Monday?

Will you nurture what God has placed within you? Will you pay the price? Will you give everything you have to bring God's vision to full term?

Waiting is the hardest part. Sometimes you get so uncomfortable, so inconvenienced, that you want to say, "Please, God! Get rid of it. I can't do this anymore.

"I can't walk this walk. It's too heavy, too hard. Give it to somebody else."

Do you know how God responds? He says: "You asked Me in worship to overshadow you. You went in to that intimate place, and you said, 'Come,' and I came.

"Now don't you want what I gave to you? Don't you want what I put inside you? Won't you carry this promise for love's sake?"

There's a prophetic connection between abortion in the church and abortion in the world. You see, the world is aborting babies because women don't want to be inconvenienced with that which causes them pain, financial responsibility or reproach. They don't want to pay the price of carrying the child to term.

Many of us do the same thing with the promises and prophetic words of God. We say, "Yes!" in the excitement and intimacy of worship and then go out and abort what God has asked us to carry.

God doesn't like abortion. It breaks His heart. He wants to see His dreams and visions come to pass in our lives—not only because they bless us, but also because they bring His glory to a lost world.

'Be It Unto Me'

Mary was an obedient lover. What set her apart? Was she stunning, capable, gorgeous? Probably not. But she was obedient. And that obedience was greater than any sacrifice.

She was just a teenage girl who was worshiping and loving God. When God's eyes searched the whole earth looking for a heart that was His, He stopped one day with was obedient to the Master.

God said: "I can use her. I can overshadow this little girl. I can use her to carry My Son."

And she said, "Be it unto me according to Thy word" (Luke 1:38, KJV).

Do you know that God can use anyone? He's just looking for someone who will say, like Mary, "Be it unto me."

All I am is an obedient lover. There is no more "no" in me. My heart's cry, like Mary's, is "Be it unto me." That's what I still say to God every day.

We often complicate the Christian faith. My prayer is simple: "Be it unto me."

"Possess me, Holy Spirit. Let me carry what You have placed within me this day. I love You, Holy Spirit. I worship You. Be it unto me."

God is looking for people who will be utterly possessed by His presence. He is looking for people He can overshadow with His intimate love, into whom He can place His seed and breathe His life.

When we allow the Holy Spirit to overshadow us, it is an act of intimacy. And what is the result of that intimacy? Fruitfulness. All fruitfulness flows from intimacy. God has predestined each of us to bear much fruit (see John 15:16).

In Mary's case, because she said, "Be it unto me," she bore the Son of the most high God. She became the mother of our Savior, Jesus Christ. That was her fruit. If you allow God's Holy Spirit to overshadow you and place His seed—His vision, His prophetic word—within you, then you will bear much fruit too.

But the only way to bear that fruit is through yielded love. You can't make fruit happen. It's naturally impossible.

You can't make a prophetic word come to pass. It doesn't matter how long you intercede. It doesn't matter how hard you bang a pulpit. It doesn't matter how many days and nights you

fast.

No, fruitfulness comes only through intimacy. You allow yourself to be overshadowed by God's love, and then you carry the promise. You carry the seed to full term. You nurture that which God has placed within you.

Do you think Mary took credit for carrying Jesus? Do you think she said: "Look what I have done. I have produced the Son of God"?

Of course not. She didn't produce the Son of God. She simply said, "Be it unto me."

Carrying the Promise

Let's say you allow God to overshadow you, and He says: "I am planting a ministry in you. The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the crippled will walk, the dead will be raised, and the poor will hear the good news."

You respond, "Yes, Lord!" And you become pregnant with the promise.

So you go out and pray for the blind, but nobody sees. You pray for the deaf, but nobody hears. You go out and love people, but there are no miracles.

Time passes and nothing happens. You feel so pregnant; you think you're going to pop.

Will you keep carrying the promise until it's born? Or will you say to the Lord, "Enough"?

I was 16 when God told me I would preach in Africa. I was 35 when I finally stepped foot in Mozambique.

Perhaps you are five, 10 or even 20 years pregnant. You don't think that your prophetic word is ever going to be fulfilled. Let me encourage you: If you will keep carrying what God

placed in you—if you will nurture it and continue to live in intimacy with Jesus—it will come to pass.

Perhaps you feel that you are “barren.” You think that your time has come and gone—that prophetic visions and new ministries are for the younger generation.

Remember Elizabeth? She was Mary’s older cousin. She was barren for decades.

But just a few months before Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, God allowed Elizabeth to conceive a son in her old age. His name was John the Baptist.

The truth is, you’re never too old. God can use anyone to minister His love to others. Age isn’t the determining factor; willingness is.

Perhaps you received a word from God at some point, but then you aborted the promise. Don’t despair. For you, there is mercy and grace.

God loves you. If you choose to live in His love, He will overshadow you again.

God is looking for yielded vessels. He is looking for people who will say: “Yes, Lord. Here I am. I don’t care what it costs. Be it unto me.”

Is there a “yes” in you for God? Is there a “yes” in you for the promise that He wants to place inside you?

Mary’s life was never the same after her visitation from God. It cost her everything, beginning with her reputation and ending with the sight of her beloved Son dying on a cross.

Yet listen at her response: “‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed’” (Luke 1:46-48, NKJV). Like

Mary, we, too, can rejoice in our great God. He is our portion and our exceedingly great reward. He loves us, and He wants to birth His great promises within us.

All we need to do is say, "Yes, Lord!"

He will overshadow us. He will plant His prophetic vision within us.

Yes, it will cost us everything. But in His timing, God will make His vision come to pass.

Heidi Baker and her husband, Rolland, founded Iris Ministries more than 30 years ago.