

Creating Fertile Soil to Receive Your Miracle

Do you need a miracle for yourself or someone you love? Most of us have at least one area in our lives (or those of friends or family members) for which we are praying, desperate to see a change.

But is there anything we can do to help facilitate a miracle? I believe the answer is yes. And I believe we find it as we look at Mary's response to the miracle of Jesus.

When the angel Gabriel appeared before Mary, he said:

"Greetings, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

When she saw him, she was troubled by his words, and considered in her mind what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Listen, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there will be no end.'"

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

The angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you. Therefore the Holy One who will be born will be called the Son of God. Listen, your cousin Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month with her who was declared barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.'"

Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be unto me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her (Luke 1:28-38).

What happened in that encounter reveals to us how we can create the fertile soil for our own miracle.

1. God wants to bless us and extend His grace to us. Miracles are an extension of God's love. I believe miracles are everywhere around us no matter what the season, but we often miss the miraculous because we are focused on the mundane. We see with natural eyes and miss the supernatural. When Jesus was born, the shepherds and wise men looked beyond the stable and saw a king. How many others missed that miracle because of the surroundings in which it came?

We have to remember that God takes delight in doing things His way. He often delivers gifts and answers to prayer in packages we don't expect. How many times is this repeated in the Bible as God brings an answer to the prayers of His people through the likes of Moses, Esther, David and Gideon, to name just a few of the unlikely packages God chose? We need to remember God rarely delivers a miracle the way we expect. We need to pray we will have "eyes to see and ears to hear" so we can truly discern what is before us.

2. He has said, "Don't be afraid." Our natural inclination, whether we are in need of a miracle or whether we are receiving our miracle, is that we allow fear to battle against faith. *Will the miracle take place? Did I really hear the Lord speak to me? Is His Word true? What if I'm wrong? What if my miracle doesn't come?* These thoughts bombard our minds as doubt comes to extinguish our faith and the hope that God can and will do what He says. But just as in the days when the angel Gabriel visited Mary to encourage her heart, so we must encourage ourselves in the Lord with the words, "Do not fear." Perfect love casts out fear. When our trust is fully

established in His perfect love for us, fear cannot take root.

3. He wants to reveal to you His plan. The angel revealed to Mary His plan and purpose. Mary didn't get the whole picture that day, but she received a glimpse into what God was going to do and the part she would play. Rarely does He show us everything at the beginning of a process. Our finite minds cannot process everything if we knew it from the start. Mary couldn't even grasp what the angel revealed to her in that encounter, and yet we see in this picture that God doesn't leave us in the dark. He guides us to let us know He is there and He is the one orchestrating the process by letting us know what He plans to do.

4. The Lord will confirm His Word. It is so easy for doubt to creep in and cause us to doubt our miracle, even as we choose to believe. The truth is when circumstances in the natural don't seem to immediately confirm a miracle has taken place, it is easy for an erosion of faith to occur. That's why God, in His grace, provides confirmations to encourage our hearts to hold fast. For Mary, the angel told her that her cousin Elizabeth, who had a history of barrenness, had conceived and was six months into the pregnancy.

God's goodness is revealed so clearly here when we see that not only did He answer the heart-cry of Elizabeth and Zachariah for a son, but in answering their prayer, He simultaneously provided a safe place for Mary to go and have someone in whom she could confide regarding the strange occurrence taking place within her. Women need to someone to talk to and process with, don't we? But who on earth would have believed Mary's wild story? Probably no one except Elizabeth, who had an equally wild story that also included an announcement by an angel.

5. Are we willing to receive? Our willingness to receive our miracle is an important factor in the process. Mary immediately believed the word of the Lord. Zechariah did not.

My husband and I had been married approximately three years when it became clear that fertility issues were present. I was able to conceive our first child through the help of a fertility specialist, but after the birth of our son, I sensed the Lord say that for our next child, we were not to pursue medical intervention to conceive. And so I prayed. And prayed. And prayed. What would God have us do?

Then I learned of a minister coming to our church who had successfully prayed for many women who had experienced fertility challenges to be able to conceive. After over seven years of marriage, I had never been able to conceive naturally. In spite of that, I went to the meeting where that minister would speak that night already expecting in my heart. My heart was the fertile soil for a miracle.

As the meeting concluded, the minister called out numerous areas about which people could come forward for prayer. I waited expectantly for her to call out the fertility issue. As prayer continued at the front, some quietly began to exit the auditorium. Others gathered in groups to talk. By all accounts, the service was over, but I remained rooted in place. As long as the minister was still praying and calling out areas for prayer, I was not going to leave. Why? Because I had come expectant.

"Honey, we need to go," my husband said as he gently touched my arm. "The service is over."

"I'm not leaving," I stated firmly. I knew what I had come to receive, and I wasn't leaving without it. And then I heard the words come through the microphone, "If there is anyone who has not been able to conceive and would like prayer, please come forward."

I immediately walked to the front and was joined by three other women. As the minister prayed over each one of us she spoke out a word, "You will conceive and give birth before the

end of the year, and your delivery will be four hours or less.”

That’s a pretty bold prayer ... especially because it was already mid-February when it was delivered. You can do the math. I would have to conceive within six weeks to meet that deadline for a full-term pregnancy. But I immediately took hold of that spoken word as the seed of my miracle. Just as Mary did all those years before, I took the word of the Lord spoken by the minister and said in my heart, “Lord, let this happen to me as you say.”

I didn’t know the other three women that stood at the front for prayer with me that night, so I don’t know if they received their miracle. But I did. Our daughter, Holly, was born on Dec. 14 of that year, and my labor took three and a half hours, fulfilling the word spoken over us that night.

In the natural, it would seem I conceived four weeks later, but in reality, I conceived the moment the word was spoken and took root in the soil of my already-expectant soul. It was then that the miracle was truly birthed. The reality of our daughter’s birth was simply the confirmation in the natural of what had already taken place in the supernatural.

What is the miracle you need today? This is a season of miracles for those who will take that Word and hide it in their heart. Let His Word wash over you today and find the fertile soil of a heart expectant to receive. {eoa}

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