

A Willing Heart

by Joshua Daniel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a willing heart in our relationship with God, and calls us to prioritize Him in our lives and to seek simplicity and transparency in our worship.

Duration: 28:34

Scripture: Matthew 1:24

Topics: "Obedient Heart", "Worship Priority"

Description

This sermon by Joshua Daniel focuses on the importance of having a willing heart and being decisive in following God's call, using the example of Mary and Joseph's obedience despite challenges. It emphasizes the need for purity, faithfulness, and worship in our lives, contrasting it with the distractions and struggles of the world. The message encourages listeners to prioritize worship and transparent living, seeking a deeper relationship with God.

Transcript

Welcome to the Lord's Challenge with Joshua Daniel. The Layman's Evangelical Fellowship International is a ministry reaching people from all walks of life since 1935. After a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ at the age of 16, Joshua Daniel has been declaring the marvelous deliverance from sin, which is freely given to all those who turn to the loving Savior.

From small villages to large cities, in many parts of the globe, through revival meetings, literature, radio, internet, and television, Joshua Daniel has been tirelessly laboring, trusting God to supply all that is needed. Wherever this message has gone out, broken relationships have been restored, sickness healed, ill-gotten money returned, and thieves turned into givers. We now invite you to watch and receive the invaluable blessing that God has for you.

We have got before us a set of very simple people of lowly station. You know, when we think of the king, a king, a savior coming from heaven, we might think in terms of glowing glory, born in a great palace, and appropriately to really great people. But on the contrary, what do we see? We see in Luke, the first chapter, the portion that we had just read, that the message was given to a young maiden, and the virgin's name was Mary.

In a remote little place, here is this virgin startled by a message that shook her. Now to you is going to be born the savior, or the one who shall be called the son of the highest. Well, it's not easy for anybody to

fathom such things.

But of course, we must presume that Mary knew that there was an expectancy amongst the people of the Jews that Emmanuel would come. That was the promise. You know, God up in the sky, God far, far away, God so remote that we can think of him only in terms, abstract terms.

Well, my dear friends, if we were to think of God only in abstract terms, you know, what good would it do to our personal, practical lives? This is the tragedy, you know, that abstraction which people have referred to as God. We dare not refer to God any longer in abstract, remote, philosophical terms which are out of reach for ordinary people. Now we have made, somehow we have made this whole religion of faith in Jesus Christ a very remote thing.

Why? Now, when I was growing up, my dear friends, I could see Christ and the word of God being fulfilled in my home. Not only did I see it in my parents and the manner in which God would answer prayer and his works, the same as they were to, are to be found in the Bible. Now, what could I do? I did not want that God.

Somehow I had the idea that this God was going to rob me of all my joy and make me a miserable fellow. I don't know how I got that idea, but looking at religious people, you can well get that idea because of their long faces. You know, my dear friends, you have got to round up a little, not in the waist, but, you know, folks, you know, you need to round up a little in your hearts.

And you can have a face that reflects. It may not be the most beautiful face on the face of the globe, but it can reflect the beauty of love and peace. You know how people can screw up their faces today at every little perplexity, every little problem.

And one of the words that are thrown around from wall to wall, ricocheting all over the place is the word problem, problem, problem. But we don't realize that God with us means a savior from all our problems. You see, where are we found lacking? Here is this young woman.

Suddenly she has to take in a message like this. God is going to be manifest through you. And what do you mean? Who can take it in? And yet this woman, this young woman could not conceive of the idea that she was going to become a mother without human agency.

You know, we are all tied up with human agency today. You know, if I can do it, well, it'll be done. You see, it's we at the center, anthropocenter, if you want to call it in a big word.

You see, you at the center, man at the center. And what a mess we have. What a mess we have.

Now, to say that every man, woman and child in the United States today owes, what is it? 30 to 35,000 each. Is it practicable that we are ever going to pay that debt? And should we be at all in such a miserable state that we are at the mercy of foreigners or people who have invested money in America? And if they withdraw their money, then our economy collapses. And of course, manufacturing has gone away little by little.

And yet to think that this nation was formulated and conceived as a nation which came into being. Don't forget this. To be able to worship God according to the Bible.

It was not a vague idea that made those early pilgrims cross the oceans. It was not some glowing idea of great prosperity. Half of them died that winter.

Yet, my dear friends, that picture is gone. Anthropocenter. We are at the center.

And of course, when we mess things up, we feel despondent and despair. It overtakes us. And we say, well, everything about me is a problem.

My family is a problem. My health is a problem. And everything is a problem.

No, my dear friends. Now to think that Mary, first of all, thought, how can this be without my compromising purity? Compromising purity was just not an option to her. Today, how different we have become.

We talk about Mary, Mary, Mary. You know, where I go for my heart rehab, cardiac rehab exercises. I find that there are so many Marys there.

So almost every other person has got Maria or Mary. All right, but what about the purity for which Mary stood? How can these things be, seeing that I don't know a man? What has happened to that cornerstone of purity in our youth, in our families? You know, army wife said to me, my husband is full of complaints. He complains about this, that, how I look and how I am and all about me.

How savage it must be. After telling a girl that you love her and you want her to be your wife, to come back cruelly at her and begin to say all manner of devastating things. Now, but that is life.

That's what is happening. Where there is no purity, there is no faithfulness either. Now, when you have these two casualties, how are we going to build a family or build a life? Now, so the Bible starts with these things.

The New Testament story starts with these things. Holiness unto the Lord. Now, when I look at the whole spectrum, what I notice is that all these people that were spoken to with the Christmas message had one thing in common.

Of course, the wise men were in a class by themselves. The shepherds were in a class by themselves. You can't imagine people giving up all their wealth, which is generally invested in their flocks or their herds.

In the middle of the night, let us go now and see this thing which has come to pass, which is revealed to us by the angels. Let us go now. The now is missing in religion today.

There is some distant thing, something somewhere, you know, and something hypothetical. The now is missing. What does it show? It shows the willingness isn't there.

Now, my dear friends, I don't know if you have ever been in a horse cart where the horse decides it's time to go home. My, I have been in that unhappy situation in a horse cart where the horse starts bucking and backtracking without any consideration for those who are in the carriage. You have to just quickly jump off the carriage if you want to save yourself.

Why? The horse has decided it's time to go home. My. Now, my dear friends, if we present such an unwillingness to the Lord, what is he to do with us? What if Mary had said, you're looking at the wrong person.

I'm just not willing to make that sacrifice. My name is gone. Nobody is going to trust me.

Society is going to be very mean to me. And I'm simply not willing to get into that slot in which you want me. Now, my dear friends, you can't imagine what this story would be like.

Or if Joseph had said stubbornly, well, well, well, who knows? Girls today don't think much of their virginity anyway. Who knows? I'm not going to go by this message. My dear friends, you know, they had a willing heart.

A willing heart humbles itself. A willing heart says, you want me in this slot? Yes, Lord. And a willing heart is a decisive heart.

You know, there's no wavering, no flapping about, flip-flopping about, and all that kind of thing. But a willing heart, I see in this whole story, a willing heart. And I tell you, in all our Christmas decorations and celebrations and all that, if we will not bring to Jesus and say, you came for me, and here is a willing heart, and I will give this willing heart to you.

You know, my dear friends, while we dither, and who and how, you know how much valuable time is lost? How many people are negatively impacted? You are the light of the world. Can Christianity claim that it is the light of the world today? Oh, the Muslims will laugh at us. Hindus will say, we have a more ancient religion.

And so on and so forth. You know, to execute, you need a willing heart and decisiveness. Now let me tell you, I was a wavering type of person.

I was not just that kind of person who could be characterized as a decisive person. But at the cross of Jesus, I could not be double-minded. Could you? Can you? At the cross of Jesus, at this beautiful manger, the savior, the creator of the world has come for me.

What shall I give him? As the children sang, what shall I give him? Can I give him less than my heart and my willingness? Oh, my dear people, we have fallen into a trough. A trough of meaningless type of pursuits, goals, and life. The foremost thing, the thing that should occupy our best strength, talent is not put at the right place.

And that is the feet of Jesus bleeding for you and me. That let us enter into the real spirit of Christmas. This willing heart, which of course means a loving heart.

And don't let us permit the devil to get us all into such a rush and such tension that we have no time for each other or time to even think or pray. No. Let this be a time of worship, of worship, of worship which cannot be intruded upon by anything, whatever.

One morning, when Gladstone was the Prime Minister of England, he had a message. It was a Sunday morning. And the Prime Minister of Britain had a message from the Queen.

Come and see me. Now. His reply was, at any other time, I am at your Majesty's command.

But not now. I am going to the house of God to worship a greater Majesty than yourself. My dear friends, let that be our attitude.

Worshipping the King with nothing to intrude into that beautiful worship. Let us pray. Let us bring to God that willing heart which can be so decisive that there will be no turning back.

O loving Father, should we not or can we not ask of you that willing heart which was in Mary, in Joseph, as he undertook such a solemn responsibility. Father, as people go to places of worship in many parts of this land and the rest of the globe, grant, Lord, that it may not be just the worship of some old mythological story which has no relationship whatever to the workaday world. Save us, Lord, from divorcing our faith that upright, transparent living from our places of work or from our family life.

Give to us this beautiful simplicity, this heartlessness, this varnish-free living which we see in this beautiful scene at Christmas. So help us in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

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You can email us at post at lefi.org or visit our website at www.lefi.org Our mailing address is LEFI PO Box 14 South Lyons, Michigan 48178 You can also call us at 248-486-6326 Until we meet again next week, may God bless you.

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