

Mary and Pentecost

Acts 1:12-14 and 2: 1-4

Besides being Mother's Day this is also the day in the Christian Calendar that we celebrate Pentecost. I believe that was the day that the church was born. So today we say, "Happy Birthday to the church of Jesus Christ" Pentecost was an event that 120 devoted disciples anticipated. And when it came it was like an explosion. One of those who experienced it was Mary, the mother of Jesus. So I think today we can honor both Mother Mary and One who was very dear to her, The Holy Spirit. She predicated in two great acts of the Holy Spirit, the conception of the Savior and the birth of His church. FBC of Antioch is considered an evangelical church. Certain convictions define an evangelical church. One is that we believe that salvation is solely based on one's personal acceptance of Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 and I Tim. 2:5

So we are uncomfortable with church fathers like Ambrose and Hippolytus who described Mary as the "incorruptible wood from which Jesus body was fashioned." We disagree with the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 which gave her the title of THEOTOKOS (God bearer) which claimed that her faith brought forth Jesus. Her position grew until Thomas Aquinas spoke of her as "the expiation of all the sins that I have committed and my only hope." But we must not blame Mary for the way she has been used. We want to agree with the angel in Luke 1:28 "you who are highly honored." Her cousin Elizabeth recognized that honor by saying " Mary, ***Blessed are you among women.***" Luke 1: 42

I believe Mary offers an excellent model for womanhood and deserves our appreciation. From her example we can identify at least five qualities to be imitated.

1. She was virtuous. She was a young woman when the angel spoke to her. Probably she was a teenager. Mary lived in a town named Nazareth which was noted for immorality. "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Well yes, a young woman named Mary. She was stunned by the news that she would give birth to a son. "How can this be, since I have not known a man?" In our society today it's almost expected that young girls will be sexually active. Almost daily we hear that they should be prepared for possible sexually transmitted disease. I still believe that young men and women should save themselves for their wedding. Heb.13:4 It is the honor they give to themselves and their spouse. [The interpreter may want to describe the strictness of the betrothal in those days.]
2. She was submissive to God's will. That was not as easy as it might sound. Questions that no doubt shook her to the core of her being were:
 - What about my fiancé? What will he say? What will he do?
 - What about my family? Will they throw me out? Will they be ashamed of me? What will my friends say? Will I be

ostracized? These questions were natural and were realistic. The critics of Jesus used it against him during his ministry, John 8:19, "Where is your father." Again in 8:41 "We are not illegitimate children." Yet she said, "I am the female slave of the Lord." Let it happen to me according to your word. Luke 1:38

3. She was a worshipper. If anyone ever questioned the relationship that Mary had with God she needs only to check out her hymn of praise in Luke 2:46, "My soul glorifies the Lord." Then a litany of phrases flow from Genesis, Job, 1st and 2nd Samuel, Isaiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel and seven references from Psalms. It could easily be said of her, "That she was a woman after God's own heart."
4. She was Understanding. What a challenge to raise a perfect son. At age twelve panic hit Mary and Joseph when at the end of a traveling day they realized that Jesus was not in their group. Rushing back to Jerusalem they found him in a dialogue with the learned teachers. Her words seem somewhat stern but Jesus quieted her spirit. Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house? Luke 2:49 so for the next thirty plus years she pondered the ways and words of her son. She treasured all his ideas, truths, behavior in her heart. Luke. 2:51 at the wedding of Cana when the wine supply began to dwindle she told the servants "Do whatever he tells you." John 2:5
5. Mary was devoted to Jesus. We see her at Golgotha watching her Son suffer. Jesus even though in great pain and exhaustion saw her and spoke to her and to his beloved disciple. Take care of her. John 19:25-27. Then 50 days after the resurrection we find her in worship with the 120 folks. Jesus had told them to wait for a power to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, all of Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. From the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit until the full force of the Holy Spirit upon the body of believers, she was there.

Actually Mary is not only a pattern for women but for us all. are called to be virtuous, obedient, worshipers; understanding of God's will and devoted to the end. If a young poor teenager from Nazareth could fulfill that calling I believe that it is possible for you and me to pursue that kind of life. What kind of life am I talking about? A life committed to advance the purposes of God. It requires that I not focus always on what is convenient for me but what is best for His Kingdom.

We are not ashamed to invite you to become a Christian. We are not ashamed to ask you to say Yes Jesus, Yes.