

“I’ll Second that Motion”

Luke 1:26-38

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It was a Claypool classic. Many of you knew Dr. John Claypool personally because he ended his illustrious career as a theologian, preacher, teacher, and author in Atlanta teaching at the McAfee School of Theology. He died on September 3, 2005, and I miss him.

In a meeting I attended last week on McAfee’s campus, someone made a reference to Dr. Claypool’s description of the Annunciation, Gabriel’s visit to Mary. “It was as if Gabriel made a motion and Mary seconded it.” Only Dr. Claypool could say it so succinctly.

You recall the birth narrative that is recorded in Luke 1:26-38. The angel, Gabriel, was sent by God to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a young maiden that was engaged to Joseph. At first she was frightened, and understandably so. In that culture, an angelic visit was not always positive. The angel encouraged Mary not to be afraid because he meant neither her nor Joseph harm. Instead, he told her that God looked with favor upon her and wanted her to have His son, whom she was to name Jesus. Her immediate reaction was to ask how this could occur since she was engaged but not yet married. The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” Luke 1:35.

What was Mary’s response to this announcement? “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said” Luke 1:38. She did what Dr. Claypool said, didn’t she? She seconded Gabriel’s motion.

What did God want Mary to do? He wanted her to give birth to Jesus and nourish and nurture him. He wanted her to teach him right from wrong, to be honest, truthful, trustworthy, reliable and dependable.

He wanted her to teach him to be compassionate, reaching out to others with grace and mercy, even those that mistreated him. He wanted her to prepare him to be a servant leader, becoming an advocate for the powerless and a voice for the voiceless.

He wanted her to teach him to be a wise and faithful steward of the time, talents and resources he would have. He wanted her to encourage him to use his enormous potential to make the world better by confronting evil, replacing it with good and pursuing justice for all people.

He wanted her to teach him the value of humility and the need for a close relationship with his heavenly Father. He wanted her to help him understand that God would be the source of his greatest needs: wisdom, guidance, direction, peace, security, strength, courage, confidence, faith, hope and love.

And then, God wanted her to be willing to let him go at the appropriate time with all the confidence in her heart that he was following his divine call.

This was no small order. **Why do you think Mary accepted this challenge and seconded that motion?** It was hard to turn down an angel, I’m sure. However, others may have.

Perhaps she agreed out of her own love for God or desire to leave her mark on the world. When given an opportunity to partner with God to change the course of history, she could not refuse, regardless of how difficult it would be.

Do you think she regretted it? No, I don’t believe she did even when she was sitting at the foot of the cross. She had to know that her efforts and his were not in vain.

It is my understanding that Dr. Claypool asked a penetrating question after declaring that Mary seconded Gabriel’s motion. **“How many motions from God have died for lack of a second?”**

This question brings it home, doesn’t it? In what ways would God like to partner with you and me to make the world better? What challenge is He laying before us today?

Is He asking you to be the kind of parent Mary was, teaching your children to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God? Is He asking you to be a respectful and responsible young person, obeying your parents and expressing gratitude for their sacrificial love? Is He asking you to be a faithful and loving husband or wife?

Is the Lord asking you to build bridges of reconciliation and tear down walls of hatred and prejudice in your community? Is He asking you to reach out to those that others have shunned? Is He asking you to be responsive to the needs of those that others ignore? Is He asking you to take the high road and forgive someone that has hurt you and rebuild a relationship?

Perhaps you have lost someone very dear and precious to you this year. Would He like to use you as a role model for overcoming grief and sorrow? Could you provide hope for others that are struggling?

Does He want to use you as a role model for confronting or overcoming addictions? Will you share your story with fellow strugglers?

Does He want to use your voice to speak out against injustice or offer an alternative to war and violence for settling disputes?

Does He want you to go back to school and live up to your potential? Is He asking you to travel down some new roads in the year to come, ones that would benefit you and your family?

Does He want to use you to show people how to run an ethical business based upon the Golden Rule? Are you willing to be a positive role model in the marketplace?

Does He want you to become more involved in our church? Would He like for you to go on a mission trip, become a team leader on one of our mission trips, teach Sunday school, work in the nursery or with our children and youth?

What would God like to partner with you to accomplish? How will you respond to His call upon your life? Will you, like Mary, second His motion? Why not ask her for some advice.