

Facebook Live
Preparing Our Hearts for Christmas
Lesson 2 – December 11, 2019
The Most Blessed Woman Who Ever Lived

I want to focus on the heart of Mary. What was it about this lady which qualified her for this incredible privilege of bearing the Savior of the world? What was in her heart?

Mary was a regular lady—she wasn't sinless, as some think, nor would she want us to worship her. But she was blessed more than any other woman to have this great privilege of bearing the Son of God.

What do we know about Mary?

- She was no doubt very young—probably 15 or 16 years old.
- She comes from a very humble town, and probably a very poor, humble home.
- She must have been taught Scripture because she certainly displayed a knowledge of Scripture in her Magnificat.
- She was engaged to a man named Joseph.

We begin to get an idea of the heart of Mary when we think about Gabriel's announcement to her that she had been chosen to bear the Messiah.

Read Luke 1:28 - 38:

Scripture makes it clear time and again that Mary was then a virgin, and remained a virgin until after the birth of Jesus. The virgin birth is not an optional theology. Your whole destiny - and mine - depends upon whether or not it is true.

Can you imagine what Gabriel's words meant to a Jewish girl who has heard all her life about David, his kingdom, his reign as King of Israel? And now, she is told that her son is going to take David's place and reign *forever*.

How does Mary react? What question does she ask?

Mary's acceptance of this announcement is absolutely remarkable: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

She could have asked:

- What will I tell my friends and relatives? No one will believe that I have not slept with some man. What will happen to my reputation?
- What will I tell Joseph? He probably won't want to marry me now.
- And if Joseph doesn't marry me, what will I do to support myself and this baby?
- If Joseph so desires he could divorce me or he could have me stoned to death for adultery.
- Gabriel, won't you please tell everyone else what you have told me?

Let's see what was in Mary's heart.

Mary had an accepting heart.

What is required of us in order to have an accepting heart? She didn't let her imagination run wild with all the "what if's" or "why's." She kept it very simple.

Do you keep your heart simple? Or do you waste emotions and time and effort in complicating issues?

Mary believed with unwavering faith. Why do you think Mary so readily believed what Gabriel told her? Was she just born that way?

You're never going to be able to trust God until you spend consistent, quality and quantity time in His Word.

Are you in the midst of some testing now? Stay in the Word of God, because that's where that instant faith comes from at those unexpected times when you need it. You need to know the Word of God to have the kind of trust that Mary had.

Upon learning that she is pregnant, Mary travels to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who may have been the only one who believed her. Elizabeth is expecting a miracle baby, too since she is beyond child-bearing years. Elizabeth immediately recognized Mary's news and called her blessed, and Mary answered with what is called The Magnificat, as found in Luke 1:46-55.

Mary had a heart of praise.

Many women would have been focusing on the negatives of this situation. But Mary had an eternal point of view and a total trust in God, so that she was able to see the real importance of her position and was able to thank and praise God for His eternal purposes, though her life on earth was very difficult.

How much time do you spend each day simply praising God? Notice that Mary used Scripture to recite back to the Lord in praise. That's a wonderful way to praise God, by reciting Scripture.

Consider Joseph. By agreeing to marry Mary and support her through this birth, he took on a heavy responsibility.

He had to take his wife and leave his home and his business and go to Egypt. Never could he have thought that this would be required of him. But when the angel gives him these instructions, he obeys.

Joseph had a very obedient heart, and a non-complaining spirit. Mary must have thanked God for Joseph time and again.

Mary had a meditative heart.

If you knew, as Mary did, that you were bearing the Son of God, how would you feel when you realized that your delivery room was to be in a very humble setting? And then, just having given birth, in come these lowly shepherds to find this baby. But Mary allows them in, and she "pondered all these things in her heart."

In addition to an accepting heart and a praising heart, Mary had a meditative heart. She thought a lot more than she spoke.

Then the day came when Jesus left his home and his mother to pursue the ministry God had planned for him, a brief ministry, ending in a crucifixion—and more importantly, a resurrection. She watched him suffer and die.

If you ever think you've got it tough, think about Mary. How could she hold up under this incredible load of suffering and confusion and emotional pressures she was enduring? Well, she was chosen for this because her heart was right:

She had an accepting heart. She kept things very simple, and didn't ask "why's" and "how's." She accepted and she trusted.

She had a praising heart, that saw the positive and not the negative. And she praised God from a heart that had been filled with the Word of God.

And she had a meditative heart, that treasured up God's goodness and God's promises. And this is what she thought of.

As we close our thoughts about Mary, the Mother of Jesus, I want to share chapter 25 from Max Lucado's book *God Came Near*. This chapter is entitled "Twenty-five Questions for Mary." Imagine sitting with Mary and asking her:

"What was it like watching him pray? How did he respond when he saw other kids giggling during the service at the synagogue? When he saw a rainbow, did he ever mention a flood? Did you ever feel awkward teaching him how he created the world? When he saw a lamb being led to the slaughter, did he act differently? Did you ever see him with a distant look on his face as if he were listening to someone you couldn't hear?

"How did he act at funerals? Did the thought ever occur to you that the God to whom you were praying was asleep under your own roof? Did you ever try to count the stars with him. . . and succeed? Did he ever come home with a black eye? How did he act when he got his first haircut? Did he have any friends by the name of Judas?

"Did he do well in school? Did you ever scold him? Did he ever have to ask a question about Scripture? What do you think he thought when he saw a prostitute offering to the highest bidder the body he made?"

"Did he ever get angry when someone was dishonest with him? Did you ever catch him pensively looking at the flesh on his own arm while holding a clod of dirt? Did he ever wake up afraid? When someone referred to Satan, how did he act?"

"Who was his best friend? Did you ever accidentally call him Father? What did he and his cousin John talk about as kids? Did his other brothers and sisters understand what was happening? Did you ever think, 'That's God eating my soup'?"

It will be good in heaven someday to hear her answer some of these questions.

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