

Christmas Through the Eyes Of...
...Mary
Luke 1:26-38
Second Sunday of Advent
December 8, 2019

Luke 1:26-38 (NIV) The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called^[a] the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Christmas is a time of the year where certain things get a lot of attention that normally don't even come to our mind.

Like fruitcake.

When else does fruitcake even come up in conversation any other time of year?

Or eggnog.

Pastor Gene indulges in the yuletide beverage.

We watch and wait (*OMG*: maybe eggnog is a metaphor for the season of Advent) for it to be stocked at the grocery store and then it just [snap] disappears.

There are certain things that only make an appearance around Christmas.

And, unfortunately, sometimes Mary is one of those things.

Mary! The mother of God Incarnate!

She's the central ADULT figure in the story!

But, she doesn't really have much notoriety throughout the rest of the year. Yes, she shows up at the Wedding in Cana and is too close during the days just before Good Friday. But otherwise...

We're using our "Christmas Through the Eyes of..." series to help us see Christmas through the perspectives of various people.

I pray that when WE see Christmas, we see CHRIST – and Jesus in different ways.

There's a song (written by some big players in the Christian music industry) [Third Day, Steven Curtis Chapman, and MercyMe] called "I See Love"

Some see a teacher standing on a hill speaking words of wisdom.

Some see a healer reaching out his hand to give sight to a blind man.

Some see a dreamer wasting his life on what can never be.

Some see a fool dying for his dreams.

But I see love, I see love Light of heaven breaking through.

I see grace I see God's face shining pure and perfect love.

Since Mary is our focus person this week, what did SHE see when she looked at Jesus.



She's a mom!

The picture on the front of your bulletin is part of the Upper Room devotional cover.

I saw it and thought "she's looking right at me!"

"Come and see for yourself," she seems to be saying.

And, because we know the story so well, I want us to look deeper for things that Mary saw...

...and that we can hold onto long after the eggnog is put away.

To Mary...

Jesus was a King who came to serve.

Yeah, her baby...a KING!

Gretchen read Luke's version (1:31-33) that included Mary listening to the angel tell her "name him Jesus" and last week we learned that Joseph had the honor of naming the baby.

Then, Mary heard more...

"He will be great."

Pastor Brian Bill wrote:

- "Jesus would be great in His love,

- great in His compassion,
- and great in His sacrifice.
- //He would live a great life,
- teach great parables and give great sermons.
- He would heal with great power and be a great example.
- He would die a great death and would be resurrected in great power.
- He would give the great commission and ascend to a great height.
- He will come again in great glory.
- And He longs to make great changes in your life and in mine, if we will but let Him.”

What’s more: *“He’s the Son of the Highest”* – meaning God.

Next week we’ll hear the angels say to the shepherds “Glory to God in the highest!”

But there’s more....

The Lord God will give him the *“throne of His father David”*

This is another reference to Him being the Messiah – who, the prophets foretold, would come through the lineage of David.

And then, *“His kingdom will not end.”*

Sometimes we see the transition from one leader to another and there is sadness that a beloved leader is gone.

But hear this Dear Ones: Jesus’ reign as King is forever.

His “term in office” will never end!

He is King of kings and Lord of Lords!

Going back to Christ the King Sunday a couple weeks ago: Are you living like He is your King?

If we had read further in Luke’s account, we’d understand a couple more reasons for Mary to beckons us closer. There are little snippets that, if we explore them, carry a lot of meaning!

Jesus was a someone to nurture.

Joseph and Mary have traveled to Bethlehem and

*“While they were there, **the time** came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.”*

It was the end of nine months of pregnancy.

But, I also think that “*the time*” is a reminder that Jesus came at just the right time.

Jesus came at the time when the Good News could spread quickly around the known world on roads built by the powerful Roman empire.

God’s timing was perfect for Jesus to be born!

And don’t take the phrase “*gave birth*” for granted.

Jesus **was** born.

He wasn’t found in a cabbage patch, dropped off by gypsies, and didn’t appear out of thin air.

Jesus was fully human just as He was fully divine.

And Mary “*wrapped and placed him in the manger.*”

He needed someone to care for Him...to wrap him and feed him and keep Him warm.

As cuddly as that sounds, that’s also why Herod, inspired by Satan, tried to murder Jesus while He was still a toddler!

Jesus came, helpless, and could have been struck down...but God...(!) and Jesus’ caring parents protected him.

What a reminder...that Jesus knows how to care for US because He had someone to care for Him.

He knows what it means to care for someone – and he cared throughout his life and beyond when his wounds healed us!

Jesus cares for you.

Will you let Him?

And finally, for today...

Do you remember, from years of hearing the Christmas story, that “Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart”? (2:19)

Well, Jesus IS a treasure to cherish not just ponder.

When we find ourselves becoming overwhelmed by the activity and stress and schedule of Christmas, we should pause and be reminded, BY MARY, that Christmas is a treasure named Jesus!

Mary held onto what she was seeing – shepherds coming, angels singing, Magi visiting – and she’s the first to be in awe. She held on to these memories and reflected on them.

And she put them in a safe place – her heart - like we do with the things we consider a treasure, we keep them in a safe place, but we bring it out to share with others.

The Apostle Paul knew the riches – more than gold and myrrh and frankincense – when he wrote to the Colossians:

“My goal is...that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Col. 2:2-3)

Earlier our kiddos shared some attributes of Mary, the mother of Jesus, the one God chose to send Christ the Messiah through. Their innocence these days, we pray, will grow into a deep faith. Because, like us, they can look at Christmas through the eyes of Mary and live in her tremendous example of faith.

Mary had one of the heaviest loads God ever gave a woman.

And while giving birth to the Messiah was the greatest honor of any woman, there surely were times when that honor wasn’t the greatest.

It might have felt, sometimes, like God was TOOOOOO silent.

And she probably wondered, all throughout her life, “What’s God’s will for me? And why?”

In the moment it was difficult to understand!

Have YOU ever felt like that?

For our reassurance – **let me say OUTLOUD: God doesn’t leave – even when it’s too quiet God is right here.**

And it may take a while, but God **will** guide our understanding for *whatever* we’re going through.

Our mid-week study is Rick Warren’s [The Purpose of Christmas](#). He names three purposes actually.

That Christmas, is to be a time for celebration....and salvation...and reconciliation.

Mary beckons us, to come closer, EVEN IN this busy season of the year.

Come closer and take in, ponder, and then put into safekeeping - but only until you're able to share the Treasure of Jesus, the Messiah with someone.

Why?

- 'Cause God LOVES us. God SOOOOOO loved us that he sent his *"one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."* (JN 3:16)
- And God is WITH us in this endeavor. God is not absent NOR distant...God is closer than our breath.
- AND God is FOR us – not against us – and God will guide our circumstances for God's best plan.

We can praise God for Mary – that we can see Christmas in deeper and more meaningful way...and make it something – better than eggnog – that we want to share with others.

Amen!