

Christmas Stories: Mary's Story  
Discussion Notes- December 14, 2025

1. What's one part of the Christmas story that still amazes you no matter how many times you hear it?

Mary's story shows that God often chooses the most unexpected people and places to accomplish His greatest plans, including a young girl from a small, overlooked town. Though Mary and Joseph faced fear, confusion, and even the pain of potential shame and betrayal, God was present in every step of their story. The angel's message reminded them that nothing is impossible with God and that His favor is often found in ordinary, imperfect moments. Even in hardship, God works eternal purposes through earthly pain, preparing a glory far beyond what we can see. The heart of the Christmas story is summed up in the promise Immanuel: God is with us.

**Read Luke 1:26-33**

*"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'"*

In Luke 1:26–33, we see the angel Gabriel show up in the life of Mary (a young, ordinary girl from a tiny, forgettable town) and tell her that God has chosen her for something incredible. She's going to give birth to Jesus, the Son of the Most High, and His kingdom will last forever. It's this beautiful moment where God takes someone no one would have expected and invites her into His huge, world-changing story.

2. What does Mary's story show us about how God chooses and uses ordinary people?

**Read Luke 1:34-37**

*"And Mary said to the angel, 'How will this be, since I am a virgin?' And the angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.'"*

Mary questions how any of this could happen, and the angel reminds her that God is already doing the impossible. Elizabeth, who was far too old to conceive, is now six months pregnant. It's like God is stacking miracles to show Mary that what feels impossible to her is completely

possible for Him. The angel ends with that powerful reminder: “For nothing will be impossible with God.” It’s a moment where God gently widens Mary’s perspective, helping her trust that He can work beyond what she can see or understand.

3. Where in your life do you need to be reminded that God still does the impossible?

**Read Luke 2:4-7**

*“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”*

Mary faced misunderstandings, shame, possible rejection from Joseph, and the weight of carrying something God-sized that no one around her could fully understand. Yet in the middle of that pain, God was quietly working out His eternal plan. God is with us in the hardest parts of our story, and He is doing more than we can see.

4. How does Mary’s experience speak to the reality that following God sometimes brings both beauty and difficulty at the same time?

**Read Matthew 1:22-23**

*“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”*

The heart of the Christmas story is captured in this one promise: God is with us. From Mary’s fear and uncertainty to the shepherds’ amazement in the fields, God stepped into the middle of humanity’s struggles and joys alike. Immanuel isn’t just a name; it’s a reality we can lean on every day. No matter our doubts, fears, or challenges, God is present, working in ways we may not see and bringing hope, courage, and peace. Like Mary, we can trust that even when life is messy or hard, God is with us, guiding every step of the story.

5. How does the truth that God is with us change the way you face your own challenges, fears, or uncertainties this week?

**Prayer/Closing:**

- Thank God for His presence in every part of our lives, especially in moments of fear, uncertainty, or pain.
- Ask God for courage and faith to trust Him with the “impossible” situations in our lives.
- Pray for hearts that recognize and celebrate God’s work in ordinary, everyday moments.

## DEEPER DIVE: Mary's Story – Struggle, Faith, and Hope

### Mary's Humble Calling and Faith

#### **Read Luke 1:26–38**

*"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' And Mary said to the angel, 'How will this be, since I am a virgin?' And the angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her."*

The angel Gabriel visits Mary, a young girl from Nazareth, and tells her she will bear the Messiah. Nazareth was an ordinary, small town, and Mary was likely a teen girl from a humble family; unprepared by society's standards for such a monumental calling. Her initial fear and questions ("How can this be?") show her humanity, while her response, "Let it be to me according to your word" (v.38), demonstrates her trust in God's plan despite the personal cost.

Mary's faith wasn't passive. Accepting God's calling meant stepping into societal risk, personal misunderstanding, and lifelong scrutiny. This moment sets the tone for the rest of her journey—faith amidst uncertainty. She models trusting God even when His plans don't align with what seems safe or logical.

### Mary's Struggles Through Jesus' Early Life

#### **Read Luke 2:41–51**

*"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.' And he said to them, 'Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' And they did not understand the saying that*

*he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.”*

When Jesus was twelve, Mary and Joseph traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. After the festival, Jesus stayed behind in the temple without their knowledge. Mary and Joseph spent days searching in anguish before finding Him, perplexed by His words about being “in My Father’s house.”

Even after witnessing the miraculous birth of the Messiah, Mary still experiences fear, worry, and confusion. Her hope in God’s promises carries her through these ongoing struggles. This moment reminds us that following God does not mean a life free of uncertainty but it means holding on to His promises while navigating real-life challenges. Mary’s persistence and reflective questioning highlight a faith that grows deeper through life’s trials.

#### Mary at the Cross – Faith in the Midst of Pain

##### **Read John 19:25–27**

*“But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.”*

At the crucifixion, Mary stands near the cross, witnessing her son endure unimaginable suffering. Jesus entrusts her to the care of the beloved disciple, showing care even in His final moments. Mary had spent over thirty years watching God’s promises unfold (from angelic announcements to seeing Jesus’ public ministry) and now she confronts the fulfillment of God’s plan in a profoundly painful way.

Mary’s faith is steadfast even in the face of ultimate grief. Her story exemplifies perseverance: she held on to hope in God’s promise from conception to crucifixion, trusting in His overarching plan even when the cost was heartbreak. Her life challenges us to maintain faith when God’s timing and purpose are not fully visible, and to trust that He is always present, working toward eternal good.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What can we learn about trusting God when His timing or plan doesn’t make sense to us?
2. What does Mary’s example teach us about holding on to God’s promises through long seasons of uncertainty or suffering?
3. What does the fulfillment of God’s promise, from the announcement of the Messiah to Jesus’ life and sacrifice on the cross, reveal about His faithfulness and the way He works His plan in the world?