


“MARY”
SPEAKER: ALEX LESSLER
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Discussion Questions

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:
Luke 2:19, also 1:38, Matt. 5:38-48, John 19:25, Rom. 12:21

Mary had a unique perspective. She saw Jesus as few others did and helps us view the Son in all of his fullness. She is a major figure in Luke's narrative. Mary's responses to the revelation of Jesus — as her soon-to-be-born baby and as her crucified-but-soon-to-be resurrected Lord — bookend his Gospel. In this message, Pastor Alex helps us understand the significance of Mary's journey between those two points. The Scriptures are clear that Mary was chosen to bear Messiah because of her character, and has much to teach us by her example.

LEAN IN: *These are ice breakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What's a treasured memory for you?
2. What do you like to “ponder?”
3. What were the circumstances like during the last time you were misunderstood or misjudged? What did that feel like? How did you respond?
4. What's one thing about this message that stood out to you?
5. How did you put the past week's teaching into practice since our group last met?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What two things does Mary do with her memories?
2. What point does Alex make about the process of treasuring and pondering in Hebrew culture?
3. In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus contrasts Kingdom responses to injustice and mistreatment with those that are typical in the Greco Roman world, that are they and how do the descriptions impact you?
4. In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus describes a new, more elevated standard of love. What is that and why is it important?
5. What was Mary's posture in John 19 and why does Alex tease that out in his message?

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What do most people do with difficult, confusing, powerful, or painful memories?
2. How do you see most people transform the things they internalize and then transmit? Is it usually helpful and healthy, and why or why not?

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3. If Mary had access to social media, how do you think she might (or not) have shared the news of her pregnancy, the rumors about it, Joseph's waffling about marrying her, Jesus' birth, etc.?
4. How does the immediacy of engaging a potentially huge audience through social media undercut the humanity of "treasuring and pondering?"
5. Where do you see contemporary examples of emotionally healthy people processing huge impactful experiences, much like Mary endured, in ways that are admirable and point to sterling character like hers?

LOOK IN: *These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. How do you internalize difficult, confusing, powerful, or painful memories that impact your relationship with God?
2. Are there memories or experiences that you need to "transform before you transmit?" If so, how might you engage with God in a spiritually healthy way to do so? How might those who love you help?
3. What inspires you about the Kingdom descriptions Jesus gives in the Sermon on the Mount? What about them intimidates you and why?
4. If you could ask Mary one question about what she learned through all those years of "treasuring and pondering," what would you ask?
5. Where do you need to stand and experience some kind of redemptive pain? How might God and your community help?

LIVE IT OUT: *These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompt and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Write out a particularly powerful memory in as much detail and you can muster. Pray over what you've written and ask God for the wisdom to treasure it, to transform it before transmitting it.
2. Choose a painful memory. Write it on a rock with a Sharpie. Throw that rock into the ocean, a lake, or a river as a symbol that you're giving it to Jesus to carry for you so that you no longer have to bear it, treasure, or ponder it. Sometimes that's the best way to transform what you're carrying. (Matt 11:28-30)