

Not Another Hallmark Christmas

Disgraced

Hallmark Christmas Movies live and die by a checklist. Snow? Check. Christmas baking? Got it. Present wrapping? Absolutely. Disgrace the main character? Absolutely not. And yet, the first Christmas was completely wrapped up with disgrace. Here was Mary, daughter of Joachim and Anne, an upright family in the little town of Nazareth, where everyone's business what everyone's business. The gossip was the teenage girl was out of control ... she'd gone and got herself in the baby-way before she could tie the knot. She'd made a hot-mess of her life and everybody knew about it. Christmas disgrace ... Mary may have been the first, but she wasn't the last. This week we'll take a look at disgrace and we'll look at Christmas grace.

Luke 1:26–38

1. Disgrace is more than the opposite of grace ... _____
includes the fear of being “ _____ ”.
2. Not every family offers _____
_____.
3. In _____ ... and in _____ ... there is
no disgrace.

My Count Me In! Commitments

- I'll be here next Sunday
- I'll invite a friend
- I'll reach out to someone who needs grace this week
- I'll intentionally get to know someone new here at RCC
- I'm ready to learn more about grace by engaging the Directions Discipleship Course

Additional Notes

Digging Deeper, Going Further

Scripture: Luke 1:26–39

Introduction: Most of the time when we read the Bible, we read it with a modern perspective. We project much of what we know and have experienced onto the passages. But more to the point, we project a cultural bias that colors the reality. Take the Christmas story ... the topic for the next three weeks. We tend to see the events through warm, fuzzy glasses that leaves our hearts ready to decorate and celebrate. But in truth, the circumstances regarding Jesus' birth were anything but warm and fuzzy. As you study this week's lesson, try and put aside the Hallmark Christmas image in order to see what really took place ... and how that might relate to us.

1. What is one of your earliest memories of your family's Christmas traditions? Your earliest Christmas disappointment?
2. Read Luke 1:26–27. What are some reasons Luke may have included so many specific details about the circumstances surrounding Joseph and Mary?
3. Read Luke 1:28–39. Nazareth had a population of about 400 during this time. How do you think the news of Mary's pregnancy would have been received by her neighbors? By her immediate family? (Would you have believed her story?)
4. In verse 29, Luke included the comment that Mary was "troubled" by the words Gabriel brought to her. What do you think "troubled" her?
5. Why do you think Mary immediately left town to be with her cousin Elizabeth and Zachariah?
6. In your experience, what are some of the ways people handle disgrace?
7. How can the church be more welcoming to people who may be experiencing disgrace by their friends, relatives, acquaintances, neighbors, co-workers, or others?

Who will you invite to worship with you this week?
