

25 Days of Advent

Seeing Jesus Through the Eyes of the Christmas Story Characters

ADVENT DAY 2: Dec. 2 – Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Devotional

As we celebrate this season looking through the eyes of all the characters of Christmas, there is none so unlikely to be at the center of this divine story as Mary. As a young, poor woman (guesstimates are she was around 14 or 15), she wasn't looking for prominence. She was simply living out an ordinary life in an ordinary town with unassuming dreams. She was all set to marry humbly, give birth to many children, and never travel far from home. She could be described as a nobody in a nothing town in the middle of nowhere.

Then, out of nowhere, this angelic being appears and tells her she had been chosen to bear the Son of God. Her initial response recorded in Luke was one of fear and confusion, and a little human skepticism. Several thousand years later we may think how cool to have an angel appear, but when Gabriel came to Mary, God had not spoken to his people or through his prophets for 400 years. And there are precious few moments recorded in Scripture when angels show up in person at all. So it's natural to think Mary was overcome with emotion – fear, doubt, confusion. She had never been with a man and the idea of becoming pregnant with the Son of God was overwhelming. I imagine her thinking, "Me, pregnant? With the Son of GOD? I'm just an ordinary girl, little more than a child myself."

And then there was the task she was being asked to bear. When Mary says, "I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word," she was saying Yes to bearing the shame of an unwed pregnancy at a time when this carried incredible social stigma. Would her friends and family believe her claim that the baby came from the Holy Spirit? Heck, she wasn't sure she believed it. And what about Joseph? Would he stay with her or send her away? We know how the story ends, but she did not.

She was saying Yes to raising the Son of God. It's hard enough to be a parent to a human child; can you imagine the burden of raising Jesus? Would every maternal fear be magnified because He was God's son entrusted to her? When she fed Him and clothed Him and rocked Him to sleep, did she wonder what would become of this child sent to save the world? It would be staggering.

Mary was also saying Yes to a lifetime of roller-coaster emotions. She would see Jesus feed multitudes, raise people from the dead, and walk on water. But she'd also see Him mocked, taunted, and rejected even by His family and hometown friends. And being the good Jewish girl she was, she'd be aware of what would eventually come – her son unjustly put on trial by His own people, her people. Every parent's nightmare is to see their children suffer, and Mary would live this in the most agonizing way possible.

And yet...she still said Yes. Will you?

Mary didn't know everything. She didn't understand everything Gabriel told her. Mary, like all of us, was prone to doubt and worry and fear. But Mary did cling to what she knew. The child inside her womb was no ordinary child. He would save His people, including her. He would reverse sin's curse. This child would rule the nations.

Think you're insignificant living in the middle of nowhere? God knows your name. No matter what you've done or who you are, you can be made new in Him. Mary's story can be our story, if we just say Yes to Jesus.

Look Up – Connect with God

Read: Luke 1:26-38; Luke 1:46-49

Key Verse: “I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May your word to me be fulfilled.’ Then the angel left her.” (Luke 1:38)

Pray: Father God, thank you for Mary’s example. Thank you for her unwavering faith, especially in the difficult circumstances she had with the pregnancy, birth, and early years of Jesus. Give us that same faith and obedience to do whatever you ask of us, no matter how difficult or unbelievable it may seem. Help us to hear your voice. And during this Christmas season especially, help us to see through the eyes of those who witnessed your birth here on earth firsthand. Give us new insights into this Bible story. In Jesus’ name.

Look In – Family Memories

Discuss: Was there ever a time in your walk with Christ when He asked you to do something that seemed impossible or improbable, something that would cause you to be shunned by your family or community, something that just flat-out stunned you and left you asking, “*What?*” Share that with your children and help them see how God walked you through that difficulty and provided for you when it seemed undoable. Consider playing “Mary Did You Know?” by Mark Lowry and talk about how the lyrics give insight to Mary’s perspective.

Activity: Look through keepsakes and pictures, and share stories of your parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents!

- Advent Tree: make or select an ornament of a mother caring for a child (perhaps one of you and your children) and put it on the tree. [Download Ornaments](#) or [Ornament Ideas](#)
- Advent Garland: put the key verse on a paper/card, assign #2, and attach it to the garland twine. [Key Verses](#)
- Advent Cards: select a card and see what the activity might be (i.e., buy a gift for a child in need). [Family Activities](#)

Look Out – Connect with Others

Is there someone in your neighborhood, school, or family facing really tough times? Could you reach out just to encourage them, let them know you're there for them, and offer to pray for them? Check into organizations in your community that minister to young, unwed mothers and offer to volunteer or meet some specific need they have. Be the hands and feet of Jesus in your community to those hurting and in need.