

# Mary and Jesus

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**Bible Text:** Luke 1:25-56  
**Preached on:** Sunday, December 24, 2017

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Please turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 1. Turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 1:26. The title of the message this morning is "Mary and Jesus" and it's like last week, I titled the message "John the Baptist and Jesus," and this week "Mary and Jesus," and we see the story of Mary in chapter 1 of Luke and also chapter 2. But as I said last week in introducing the message, the reason that Luke brings up John the Baptist and he brings up Mary is to lift up Jesus Christ. That is his reason, that is their role and that is his reason for bringing them up and explaining and expounding upon their experience. It's all about Jesus. The Gospel is all about Jesus. Christianity is all about Jesus. And in reality, Mary and John the Baptist were all about Jesus.

It's one of the, I think, really distressing and saddening, disheartening things is to see how Mary is misunderstood and mischaracterized by the Roman Catholic Church. The veneration of Mary. They say they don't worship her but they honor her. They pray to her. They see her as sort of a kind listening ear that can then get the attention of Jesus, like a Mediatrix, a Co-Redemptrix, as if we need someone else to mediate between God and us. The Bible says there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. And I think probably the only person more grieved than Mary herself by this unbiblical ungodly practice is God. I mean, she is probably secondly grieved more than anyone else in heaven as whatever knowledge we have of things when we are in heaven, what's going on down here. But I want to look at it in the right way, in the balanced way, the way the Bible shows it because the Bible does have things to say about her and when we understand it correctly, we have a biblical balanced view of her like every other saint, every other true believer that we're told about in Scripture.

So I want us to read verses 26 to 45 and we're going to think about what the Lord tells us in his word about Mary and how that exalts her son, our Lord, her Lord. Verse 26, now remember I'll just summarize again. We saw last time John the Baptist, Luke's purpose is to confirm the faith of the person he's writing to and the persons he's writing to. He is giving us historical facts to buttress our faith. We are not following cleverly devised tales. These aren't just made up stories, mythologies that make you feel good. He's saying and his purpose in writing the book as we saw last week when we read verses 1 to 4, is to lay out the chronology of what actually happened so that your faith can be firm and you can be certain of the things that you've heard. God has acted in time and space in real people's lives and that's why you and I can have confidence that the God of the universe, as great

as he is and as small and insignificant as we are, that the God of the universe is interested in your life. How do I know that? Because he makes it clear in his word and that's the message of the Gospel, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. He wants to be reconciled to you and to me. So as we look at what Luke sets before us, remember these are facts that are to strengthen and confirm our faith. We believe a truth-based religion, fact-based faith, not fanciful imaginations or fables.

Well, we saw that John the Baptist's birth was a supernatural birth given to an older man and woman who had been barren. Elizabeth, we saw the story of her. She's actually a relative, a cousin of Mary, and so she has conceived and we find out that she has waited five months in seclusion. We read this right before this passage. We read it last week. She's not telling people like many folks would do, especially if you've had trouble getting pregnant, you don't tell people until later in the pregnancy. You pass the first trimester and it's alright, a lot of time that happens. She has waited almost until the end of her second trimester. She's in her sixth month. She has completed five months of her pregnancy and she has kept herself in seclusion. So none of her family has been told about it. Word hasn't spread from where she lives in Judah to where Mary lives in Nazareth.

Now verse 26, "Now in the sixth month," the sixth month is relative to the conception of John the Baptist, the pregnancy of Elizabeth. Now in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy.

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. 39 Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 And

she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." 46 And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. 49 For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. 50 And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. 51 He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed. 54 He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever." 56 And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home.

Let's pray together.

*Father, we ask that you might now open your word to us and that the entrance of your word might give light and in your light we might see light, we might see the glory of your Son. We pray this in his name. Amen.*

I want to consider our thoughts around two points this morning and the first major point is the importance of Mary. The importance of Mary. She does have a very important central role to play in the unfolding plan of redemption and we see the importance laid out. A couple of subpoints here to show us the importance of Mary. The first is we see the importance of Mary in the words spoken about Mary. The words that are spoken about Mary. First of all, by the angel. The angel when he greets her, we read, "Greetings, favored one." He calls her a favored one. This is sometimes translated "full of grace" in the older translations, King James, and that's part of actually what became part of the "Hail Mary" because the way they translated this phrase actually is "Hail Mary, full of grace."

Now the word "hail" which I read "greetings" in the NASB, the word actually literally means "rejoice." It is the Greek verb *chairō* in the imperative form, and it is sort of like a greeting like "be happy." The closest thing to us might be something like, "Good morning." You know, when you say good morning, most of the time we say it and we just mean it, it's a formality, right? "Good morning," and you try to remember is it really morning, "Oh, it's noon. Sorry about that, good afternoon." Good morning. Good night. But technically you are wishing the person a good morning. It's supposed to be a well wish. You know, you are wishing them well and so, so was this idea of rejoice. The word actually literally was "rejoice," but it didn't so much mean it in a lot of your greetings, it

was more like hello. So hail is kind of an older English way of saying, "Hey, over here! Look! Hi!" So hail came that way. You know, like you hail a cab. "Hey, I'm over here. I need a cab."

Well, hail then kind of got infused with the idea of hail like honor but that's not what the word means at all. The word means "rejoice," so really what the angel is saying, "Be happy, the Lord is with you. Be happy, favored one." And it can mean full of grace but not as a dispenser of grace, not as someone who gives grace, but as someone who has received grace. "Be happy, you have received grace. God has had favor upon you." In fact, that's clear and emphatic. "Favored one" translates a perfect passive verb for showing grace and it means perfect passive, perfect tense means that something that happened in the past that has ongoing results. So God made a decision to favor you and you are now under his favor. Decision in the past happening now. But the passive voice, not just the tense, that's perfect tense, passive voice, active voice, the subject does the action, passive voice, the subject receives the action. You know, I hit the ball, that's an active use of the word "hit." In English we have the same, well, we don't... I was hit by the ball. Was hit, passive. This basically doesn't say, it says that she was the object of grace. She received grace. She doesn't show grace, she doesn't give grace, she is the recipient of grace. Favored one in that sense. She is the object of God's favor, that God has chosen and his favor, his grace is unmerited. God does not show favor to anyone because they earn it, he chooses freely to show grace to whom he will show grace. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious."

So he has chosen to show favor to Mary so he says, "Rejoice, favored one, the Lord is with you." And she doesn't reply but he can tell from the expression on her face that he needs to add something to it. I don't know what, you know, an angel's thought process is but he quickly, look at the text. He comes in and he says, "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you. You ought to be really happy, the Lord is with you. You are favored under the favor of God." But he looks at her, she was very perplexed at this statement and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. He can see it in her face, she is not happy. She is greatly perplexed, very troubled. It's an emphatic word which pictures, the verb pictures the troubling of water, the agitation of water, and that verb is intensified. She is troubled through and through. Emotionally she is distressed. I mean, this is generally the way people respond to angels showing up. I don't know why the angel is surprised. It did start off with do not be afraid. That's what he said to Zacharias, "Do not be afraid."

The first thing they should say every time but this time he starts off with, "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you." She is perplexed at the statement. She is pondering, "What in the world is he talking about? Why is an angel here? Why is he saying I am favored?" And then he says, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." So he emphasizes the fact of her being under God's favor. He tells her that in verse 28 and verse 30 and the idea of the word "favor" here is the word "grace." You are the recipient of God's free and unmerited favor. He is showing you kindness in spite of the fact that you do not deserve it. It's the definition of grace. He treats us not as we deserve, he treats us with kindness.

And it doesn't set her apart in any way from other Christians, other believers in the Old Testament, for instance. We are all under grace. This kind of, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord, Genesis 6:8. It wasn't because Noah was any kind of special man. He just found favor in the eyes of God. God showed grace to him. Abraham found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Moses found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Gideon, David. It is said over and over again. But it does show that God has shown grace to her and he is showing amazing kindness to her.

So that's the first thing. The words, the importance of Mary is seen by the words spoken about Mary. Mary, first of all, by the angel, secondly, by Elizabeth. The importance of Mary is seen by the words spoken about Mary, not just by the angel but also by Elizabeth. What did Elizabeth say about Mary? In verse 42 after she hears the greeting, she is filled with the Holy Spirit, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" She calls her blessed. She says the same thing in verse 45, "blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her." She calls her blessed twice. It is two different Greek words. The first means "to speak well of." You are one who I am going to speak well of. Then the second one is "one possessing the favor of God marked by fullness and happiness."

So she is favored and she is blessed. She is marked by fullness even though she doesn't know it yet. In fact, this is what is so perplexing to her, she doesn't, when she started out this day, she wasn't walking around saying, "I am favored and I am blessed." I think that's why she's actually so shocked. "Why are you here with me?" And she talks about her humble estate, her lowly estate. "I'm nothing. Why are you here?" But she is possessing blessing and favor just because God has chosen to bless her and to favor her and she is finding that wonderful news out through the angel and through her own cousin, Elizabeth. Her life will be marked by fullness of joy. That's the idea of blessed, anyway. You know, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Oh, how happy. Oh, how happy are you, Mary." That's what Elizabeth is saying.

So her importance is seen in the words that are spoken about her but also by the angel, by Elizabeth and also by Mary herself. She actually says the same thing in verse 48, "For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed." People will continue to talk about throughout all generations how blessed I was. And that's true and we should. It's an amazing reality as we continue to talk about her today, that she was chosen by God to bring God into flesh, but not in anything inherent in her, but what an amazing reality. But this doesn't set her apart from other people. I mean, think of Jesus' words in Matthew 26:13 about another woman that all generations would count blessed. Matthew 26 when he was talking about, we know from reading the parallel passage in John, it was Mary who anointed Jesus with perfume before his crucifixion, a few days before his crucifixion, and remember, the people reacting to the fact that he, this expensive bottle of perfume was used on Jesus and he said, "I tell you that wherever the Gospel is preached in the whole world throughout history, what this woman has done will be spoken about her in memory of her." So it's that kind of thing. Mary will be, continue to be someone we talk about throughout history and here she is recorded in the pages of Scripture.

So the importance of Mary is seen, the importance of Mary, the first major point is seen in the words spoken about Mary by the angel, by Elizabeth and by Mary herself, but the importance of Mary is not just seen in the words spoken about her, it's also seen in the miracle done through her. The miracle done through her. The miracle of the Incarnation, the supreme supernatural birth, the virgin birth.

Now we said last time that supernatural birth is something significant in the Scriptures. I explained how the idea that Elizabeth was barren until old age, into her old age, and then God gave a baby to her in her old age was intended to show us that God was acting in history. And I shared with you how we see that way back in the beginning when God has promised, when God promises Abraham that he's going to bless the whole world through his descendants, then as we watch that unfold, we keep seeing this supernatural birth theme. God is going to bless the whole world through your seed, through your descendant, and yet Abraham is childless. But finally Isaac is born to a man 100 and to a woman 90 years old. Then Isaac now bearing that same promise that through him all the descendants of the earth will be blessed, he needs a descendant and his wife is barren for 20 years. They are married 20 years before they have a child and they finally have Jacob and Esau. Then Jacob, the wife of his choice, they are having trouble conceiving and God opens the womb for Rachel and Joseph is born. So Isaac, Jacob, Joseph are all the children of supernatural birth. I mentioned Samson and Samuel as well, these same things, this resonance and refrain throughout the Old Testament. It finally happens again in John the Baptist. But all of that is just to set the stage for the greater supernatural birth that we see here, that Mary will give birth to a child while having never had relations with a man. A virgin birth.

Do you see how it is emphasized? You know, Luke is very subtle in the way that he just presents the facts, but with emphasis when you look carefully. Look at how he described Mary in verse 26 and verse 27, "in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph." He didn't start off with her name. The angel went to a virgin who was engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, "of the descendants of David," and her name was Mary? No, "and the virgin's name was Mary." Do you see that?

And then we have Mary asking the question and we have Luke recording that for us, what she said in verse 34. Not every word is recorded that are spoken in situations like this, but this is. "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" Three times we are reminded virgin, virgin, virgin to recall to mind the prophecy of Isaiah in 7:14, Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." Immanuel in Hebrew means "God with us." Immanu, with us, el, God. Immanuel, God with us.

So Luke is showing us that this birth is going to happen in a way entirely outside of the laws of physics. This is God doing something extraordinary and it's the fulfillment of the oldest prophecy of the Gospel in the Bible, Genesis 3:15. Turn back over with me, the very first book in the Bible, and after sin has entered the world, man has, Adam and Eve

have eaten of the forbidden fruit, death has come into the world, they have died spiritually, "In that day that you eat of it, you will die." They have died spiritually. They have died to God, separated from him, going to be cast out of the garden. In verse 15, the Lord in speaking to the serpent makes a prophecy, the first preaching of the Gospel in the whole Bible is right here, verse 15, "And I will put enmity Between you," that is the serpent, between you, "and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." Satan has become the god of this age. Satan is the ruler of this present darkness but there will be a seed of a woman who will come and that seed of the woman will have enmity with your seed, Satan, and he will bruise you on the head though you will bruise him on the heel.

Now the interesting thing about that, it must have really caused consternation and confusion throughout the centuries because this happened 4,000 years before Jesus was born. Moses wrote it down about 1,400-1,500 years before Jesus was born but this prophecy was known all throughout and passed down from, you know, Seth all the way down and then here we have it, and they must have wondered at the seed of the woman. The woman does not have seed. You see this even clearer when you understand that the actual, well, the Hebrew word is zera, which means seed, but in Greek, in the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, when you read this verse, Genesis 3:15, you read, "I will put enmity between your sperma and the sperma of the woman." Do you hear that? Sperm. The seed is that which belongs to the man and so seed was never to be talked about with a woman but God says it will be the seed of the woman, he will bruise your head and you will bruise his heel. That must have been perplexing and kind of an idiosyncrasy in the Scriptures. Like a mistake. No, it wasn't a mistake, it was the prophecy of the virgin birth because when God would send that Redeemer, he would be born of a woman without the aid of a male seed. A virgin birth.

So Mary is the one chosen by God, prophesied 4,000 years before this event happens. In the mind of God, she's the one he has favored to bring his Son into the world through. This, in some sense, is the greatest miracle of all. True that we would not have a faith if not for the resurrection, but the miracle of the Incarnation is something extraordinary in itself.

J. I. Packer writes in his book, "Knowing God," about this. He's talking about how people struggle with various miracles in the message of Christianity, you know, the miracle of Jesus, the resurrection, but he points out that the really profound miracle is the miracle that God became flesh. Listen to what he says, he said, "It is no wonder that thoughtful people find the Gospel of Jesus Christ hard to believe for the realities with which it deals pass man's understanding. Take the atonement, for instance. Many feel difficulty here. How, they ask, can we believe that the death of Jesus of Nazareth, one man expiring on a Roman cross, put away a world's sins? How can that death have any bearing on God's forgiveness of our sins today? Or, they add, take the resurrection which seems to many a stumbling block. How, they ask, can we believe that Jesus rose physically from the dead? Or take the Gospel miracles. How can one believe that he walked on the water or fed the 5,000 or raised the dead? Stories like that are surely quite incredible. With these and similar problems, many minds on the fringes of faith are deeply perplexed today."

People struggle with that, he says, these miracles, right? But then he adds this, "But in fact the real difficulty with which the Gospel confronts us does not lie here at all. It lies not in the Good Friday message of atonement nor in the Easter message of resurrection but in the Christmas message of Incarnation. The really staggering Christian claim is that Jesus of Nazareth was God made man; that the second person of the Godhead became the second Adam, that is, the second man; that he took humanity without loss of deity so that Jesus of Nazareth was as truly and fully divine as he was human. It is here in the thing that happened at the first Christmas that the profoundest and most unfathomable depths of the Christian revelation lie. The Word was made flesh. God became man. The divine Son became a Jew. The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child, and there was no illusion or deception in this. The babyhood of the Son of God was a reality. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation. This is the real stumbling block in Christianity. It is here that Jews, Muslims, Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses and many of those who feel the difficulties above mentioned have come to grief. It is from this belief or at least inadequate belief about the Incarnation that difficulties at other points in the Gospel story usually spring, but once the Incarnation is grasped as a reality, these other difficulties dissolve."

So once you believe that Jesus is fully God and fully man, why is it hard to believe that he walked on water? Once you believe he is fully God, how is it hard to believe he got up from the grave? He was able to say, "I lay my life down and I have been given authority to take it up again"? The living God has become flesh, that is the amazing thing, and this greatest miracle of all was done through Mary. She was the vehicle that God used, the human instrument, and for those reasons she was called blessed and favored. That's the importance of Mary seen in the words spoken about Mary but also the miracle done through Mary.

Now the second major point this morning, we've considered the importance of Mary, the second major point is the ministry of Mary. The ministry of Mary. There are three subpoints here. She was called to do three things basically. First of all, she was called to bring him up. She was called to bring up the human Jesus. This meant she was called to bear him in her womb. I mean, she had him in her womb. At the moment of conception, God entered time and space. I think Max Lucado says something like this, I'm trying from memory here: in a moment, in an instant, the omnipotent became piercible. At the moment of conception, the omnipresent God is now located in a place. The Spirit becomes physical. It staggers the mind.

But her job was to carry him through her pregnancy, so she like every pregnant woman, she grew and became great with child, as the King James says, and she had to deal with him moving around and all of that. Her own body nourished him like every other woman nourishes the baby. She gave birth to him and we read about in Micah 5 that she who is in labor and travail would give birth. And it was a childbirth like every other childbirth,



painful since the fall. Not only painful but added to that that she was in a barn, a stable. Not in a hospital. Not in a house.

She had to bring him up so she had to give birth to him, she had to care for him. As Packer was writing she had to teach him to speak. I mean, she had to teach Jesus to form his sounds. Think about that, the one who made her mouth and formed her in her mother's womb is now needing to be taught to speak. "No, it's baa, baa, baa." She is teaching him. She taught him to walk. She changed his diapers. She taught him to read. She read the Scriptures to him. Isn't that just amazing? He is the author of all the Scripture. How does this work? Well, he is fully God. He didn't stop being God. He didn't lay aside his deity. He lay aside the prerogatives of deity and he experienced full humanity, how can that be? Two natures in one person. That's the amazing miracle that goes beyond anything fiction has ever dreamed up but it's true. It is glorious reality and it was necessary for God to save sinners like you and me.

So her job was to bring him up. She taught him to do chores. She reminded him to take out the trash. Now, he never sinned but she had to teach him all these things. His dad taught him how to hammer or whatever the instruments they were using in carpentry, and saws and those things.

Her job was to bring him up. That was the ministry of Mary, that was the first sub point. The second point of her ministry, second part of her ministry was to let him go. Like every other mother, you bring up your child and then you let them go. You train them up and they launch, right? And she had to let him go.

We see this happening a little bit in an interesting way and Luke lets us right into some of the experience that she had. I mean, we see the story in verses 41 of chapter 2, 41-50. Chapter 2, 41-50 of the trip to Jerusalem. They went every year to Jerusalem for the Passover and one year on the way back from Jerusalem to Nazareth, they get like a half-day out and they realize that Jesus is not with them. Now you've got to understand, they went in big caravans. Imagine the whole family, you know, you've got 25 people plus another couple of families coming and we're all going together and the kids are playing together and, "Okay, we are leaving now. Everybody is ready to go." Well, they leave and they think Jesus is with them and they get part of the way back and they realize, you can see Joseph and Mary, "Hey, where is Jesus? I told you to watch him." That's probably Mary is saying that to Joseph. And he was like, "I'm sorry. I was checking the scores of the ballgame and I lost track." Well, they turn around and they go back and they find him and he is in the temple and he, at 12 years old, is confounding the priests and the chief priests and the priests that are there in his knowledge. Now, he has learned that by poring over the Scriptures himself, being taught them by her and Joseph.

Remember, she finds him and you hear her perplexity. Verse 48, verse 47, "all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers." They are asking him questions and they can't believe his answers, the priests. Verse 48, "When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, 'Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.' And He said to them, 'Why is it

that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" Now this is the beginning of the moment seeing that her letting him go is going to be a little bit different and more profound than the average mother letting her son go. He is already feeling the urgency to be in his Father's house, his true Father, God. She said your father and I but she knew that's not your true father. Joseph is not your true father, he's just the one standing in as your father.

But as we read on, we see that the Lord tells them you've got to go back to being in subjection and so it says in verse 51, "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart." She keeps pondering these things, but she had to let him go and it was more profound than the average mother because Jesus had to be quite emphatic about it. It's interesting, you read Luke, I want you to watch this as we go through Luke itself.

Turn to chapter 8, verses 19 to 21, and these are verses that should slam the door on any of the Catholic heresy of veneration of Mary because here the opportunity Jesus had to if he really intended there to be this veneration of Mary, that they act like there should be, then this would've been the opportunity to make it clear and look what Jesus does in these next couple of passages. Luke 8:19-21, "And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd." There is a crowd around him and they can't get to him. "And it was reported to Him," they come to Jesus and they say, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You." Your mother and James and Jude and the other brothers. He had four brothers. Mary had four other sons, two of them wrote books in the Bible, James and Jude. They are half-brothers of Jesus. So your mother and the brothers are here and look what he says, verse 21, "But He answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.'" It's no longer about family connection. The people who are attached to me are the people who do the word of God. That had to be a little bit painful. Painful but necessary. She could not look to her relationship with Jesus to save her, her physical relationship.

Chapter 11, verses 27 and 28. Jesus is going along, he is teaching, he is healing. "While Jesus was saying these things," 11:27, "one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him," now get the picture. He is healing, he is teaching and to hear Jesus teach must have been amazing and this woman hears Jesus teaching and this is what she says, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed." Now in a sense, is that not true? Did we not hear earlier that all nations, all generations would call her blessed? This is an opportunity for Jesus to affirm her supreme position. "Yeah, you all need to pray to Mary." What does he say? She said, "'Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.'" But He said, "'On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.'" He essentially says, "No! It's not the woman who nursed me and who birthed me. The person that is happy is the one who knows the word of God and does it." He is severing any of that nonsense and making clear that the only way to be right with God is to come to Jesus not in some kind of even family or relation, you come to him as your Lord and Savior. Now these things were hard

obviously for Mary if she gets word of that kind of thing but it's true. Love speaks truth because anything less would not be love.

She had to let him go. I mean, she was told this actually back in chapter 2 by Simeon. Remember when they go to the temple the first time to offer him in fulfillment of the law when he is just a baby, about six weeks old, and the old man Simeon who has been looking for the salvation of Israel, comes up to them and he sees Jesus and he sees in Jesus, God is telling him, "This is the one. This is the one that brings salvation," and he prophesies about him. In verse 34, he "blessed them and said to Mary His mother," he looks at Mary and he wants to talk to her. Joseph is there too but he looks at Mary and he says this to her, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed-- and a sword will pierce even your own soul-- to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." He says, "Listen, a sword is going to pierce your soul." God in his grace speaking through this man prophesying by the Holy Spirit, is preparing her. "You are blessed. You are set apart. I have loved you and chosen you to be the vehicle through which my Son comes, but I'm going to save you the same way I save everybody else. You must repent and believe in Jesus Christ because you are a sinner like every other sinner." There is only one person that has ever been born of a virgin birth and that is Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church invented the Immaculate Conception to make Mary special. They imagined, somebody spoke in church tradition and said that her mother had a virgin birth so that Mary, then, could be pure to give birth to Jesus. Kind of philosophical reasoning. There is nothing in Scripture that would lead us to believe that at all. It's the fanciful imaginations of man.

She had to let him go. She was to bring him up first. That's her ministry, to bring him up, to let him go, and thirdly, to lift him up. To lift him up to his proper place. He is God. Now this is something and as you look at and really think about, this is the beauty of the Bible. It's just so real. It wasn't like the angel came to her and he tells her all this stuff. She humbles herself, she believes, yes, she responds in faith but she doesn't understand everything. She has no idea what's in store for her. She has no idea that she is really going to bear God. She doesn't know that. She knows that the Messiah is coming, she knows that she is having a virgin birth, but she doesn't fully understand what we understand and what unfolds in the New Testament that this baby was fully God at the same time he is fully man. There is a progression in her understanding. That's the way it is with all of us. Even when you get truly saved, you don't understand everything. Well, none of us understands everything and we are not going to understand everything in heaven, but we grow to understand more and more.

She responds in faith when the angel comes in a beautiful way, the bondservant of the Lord. "Lord, I am your slave. Do whatever you want with me." That's the heart God blesses. "I'm your slave, do whatever you want with me." And she keeps doing that but she keeps running, just like Jesus said, "To follow me, you must take up your cross daily if you want to be my disciple." Mary had to do that. She had to die daily and in some ways that were more profound because of her relationship with Jesus, but it's essentially the same path that every true believer follows. "If you will not die to yourself, you cannot be my disciple," he says. And Jesus loved her enough to make that distance and

separation. You see it even in John 2, remember when she comes to him at the wedding, Cana of Galilee. He doesn't say mother, he says, "Woman, what do I have to do with you?" Now, he didn't say it in a sinful way but he was reminding her even then, "It's not that you are my mother, you are a woman, you need a Savior and I'm about to be revealed as your Savior."

Now look at this progression. First of all, you see it is somewhat evident even at the beginning. She understands in verse 47, verse 46 she says, "My soul exalts the Lord." My soul magnifies the Lord. That's why it's called the Magnificat. My soul magnifies the Lord. She is about worshiping God. She doesn't claim to have any kind of equal status with him. She is about worshiping God. "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." She knows she needs to be saved. She wants to make much of the Lord and she knows she needs a Savior. She is a sinner who needs a Savior.

She goes on to say in verse 48, "For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed." Why is she blessed, though? She tells us. "Why am I blessed? Why am I happy?" Verse 49, "For the Mighty One has done great things for me." It's all about what God has done for me, that's what makes me happy. This is the essence of saving faith, it's when you understand that you can do nothing, that you must trust in everything that he has done.

You see her use 10 verbs speaking of what God is doing. Now she understands at some level this is happening through the birth of her son and the Spirit is working through her in this moment and she is prophesying some things about Jesus. "He is going to do these great things. God is going to do these great things somehow through my child." Look she says, "He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant." That's what the Lord has done, verse 48. Verse 49, "the Mighty One has done great things for me." Verse 51, "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered... He has brought down," verse 52, "He has exalted." Verse 53, "He has filled and sent away." Verse 54, "He has given help." It is all about what God does.

So she is looking to the work of God that he is going to do through Christ but she doesn't fully understand who he is and you see this progression unfold. Look with me at how we see this. Now, she has some understanding. She knows that God is going to do great things. He is bringing salvation somehow through her child but when you read on into chapter 2, after we read about the birth in Bethlehem and the angels, the announcement through the angels, verses 8 through 14, then remember the shepherds who the angels have announced to, they hurry to Bethlehem to see the sign which the Lord has made known. They go and they find the baby in the manger just like they had been told. Verse 17, "When they had seen this," that is the baby laying in the manger with Mary and Joseph, "When they had seen this they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds." All who heard it, Mary and Joseph and whoever else was there were marveling at what the shepherds said. "Angels appeared?"

Now think about this, for Mary and Joseph to be marveling, if they fully, remember, they don't know. We've got to remember when we read the Bible to read it as if it's really happening at that moment and we don't know the rest of the story. Mary and Joseph don't know the rest of the story. They both have been visited by an angel and they have been told that Jesus is going to save, that he is the Savior, but they don't fully understand so that when the shepherds come, they're kind of like, "Wow, angels came? Really?" If you knew the big picture you'd say, "Well, of course angels came. What do you think? The Son of God has come into the world." But they are marveling at that. That's what it says in verse 18.

Look at verse 19, "Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart." Just like she pondered, remember when the angel greeted her she was troubled and she kept pondering, "What's going on here?" She is putting these things in her mind. In fact, this idea when it says she treasured all these things, literally the word means she threw together these things with what she already knew. She's thinking, "What the angel told me, what I experienced with Elizabeth about my son, now the shepherds," and she is bringing those things in and she's continuing to, "What does this mean?" and she's considering, she is guarding it and pondering it.

Then six weeks later they go to the temple, verse 33. I told you Simeon talks to them, but before he says what we read a minute ago in verses 34 and 35 about the piercing of her soul, verse 33, after he first does his prophecy about Jesus when he says, "'A light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.' And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him." Again, why would they be amazed if they really knew fully? "Yeah, it's about time somebody said something about my son. This is the Son of God." That's not how they are thinking. They are experiencing real life and they have an angel and then they wait nine months. Nothing happens except they get the bad news they've got to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem with her eight and half months pregnant. I mean, I imagine they were grumbling. You know, at some level they had to certainly deal with it, a grumbling issue. They get there and this happens and then the baby, they hear about the angels. Wow. Then six weeks later here is Simeon, but in between that six weeks nobody is coming, there are no angels coming. They are just living life. They are feeding the baby, they are changing diapers, and then that comes.

Then as we looked at a minute ago, at 12 years old, nothing happens from then until 12 years old. They lose Jesus. They go back and find him. The people are astonished. The priests must have said, "What have you been teaching this boy?" And then he says, "I must be in my Father's house." And look what it says after that, verse 50, chapter 2, "But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart." Luke keeps telling us, "Man, she is wrestling with this. What is it? Who is he? What is God doing? What does this mean?"

Then he goes back home and he shows up in the shop at 8 AM and he works with his dad 8 to 5 or whatever the schedule is, and he keeps doing that until he is 30 years old.

Eighteen years pass. Joseph has apparently died at some point and then he is taking care of her. He is the oldest son. They are at a wedding in Cana. She knows he can help. She has begun to understand, "You have power. There is a problem here. Son, please fix it." "What do I have to do with you, woman? My time has not yet come." "Whatever he tells you to do, do it. I'm not going to argue with him. Just if he has anything to tell you to do, do whatever he says." "Fill those waterpots with water." He makes water into wine.

He starts doing his miracles but they don't understand that he's going to die on a cross. She's not fully privy to all of this. She's like all the other disciples, wondering at it. Then she sees all those things unfold and then she sees him laid in the tomb. Her heart is pierced as she sees her son pierced with a spear, rejected, scorned, hated, her precious son, and then dying on the cross, and on the third day risen from the dead, Lord of glory. Now it is making sense. "Not my son but my Lord and my God."

Her job is to lift him up and that's what our job is, is to lift him up. Jesus and Jesus alone. As Paul says in Colossians 1, that in everything, that in all things he might have the preeminence. No rivals. No need for any help to get the ear of God. What a blasphemous ignorant thought that is. You know, so many folks, I know it's just ignorance, they don't know better. But to think that you need to pray to Mary so that you can get in a good word with Jesus because he is so uncaring, is to completely miss the whole message. You have believed a lie.

You are believing that God is not good and what you see in the life of Jesus, Hebrews 2, just read the book of Hebrews 2 to 5. Since the children share in flesh and blood, he also partook of the same that through death he might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil. Since the children share in flesh and blood, he partook of the same so that he could come into the world and die and defeat death, and it goes on to say and he was tempted in every way and he suffered all things so that he might be a faithful – listen to this – a faithful and merciful high priest. He experienced every manner of suffering so that he could come alongside you when you are suffering, when you are doubting. You have a Savior that understands what it is like to be a man.

He goes on to say in chapter 4, you can come boldly to the throne of grace not because you have Mary or you have a saint to pray to. No, God forbid. You can come boldly to the throne of grace because you have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, one who is able to sympathize with us in our weaknesses. He comes and feels what you feel and he has done everything necessary, he has passed through the heavens, he has taken his blood into the throne room of heaven, the true altar, and he has offered it there and therefore you can come boldly into the very presence of God without any help, without any other human help. He alone is the Mediator. He's all you need.

And not only is he the one that comes alongside us, but he gives us the Holy Spirit. That's why he said, "I'm going to send to you another Comforter, another Helper." That's what he says in John 12 to 15. "Hey, I know you're sad that I'm going but it's good that I go because if I go, I'll send another Comforter, another person." That word means paraclete in Greek, it means "one called alongside." Someone is in trouble and you call someone to

come and help you, that's the paraclete. The paraclete comes alongside to help you. Jesus said, "I will send another Comforter." Who was the first Comforter? Jesus himself. He's the Comforter. He's the one that comes alongside you to help you and now by giving us the Holy Spirit, the Trinity is always with us to help us. We need no one to get in the presence of God except Jesus. He is everything that we need and if Mary were here today, able to be here and of course she's not, she's in heaven. No need to try and talk to her, talk to Jesus. But if she were here, she would say, "Talk to Jesus. Go to Jesus. It's all about him."

Let's pray together.

*Our Father, we thank you for the glory of what you've done in saving sinners, the mercy that you have shown us in being willing to give your Son. Lord Jesus, we marvel at you, the second person of the Trinity, that you were willing to leave the glory of heaven and enter time and space and to experience true human life in a fallen world; that you were tempted in every way; that you were a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; that you suffered and learned obedience through the things that you suffered and by your suffering you have become a perfect Savior, able to deliver us from sin, able to deliver us from every form of trial and tribulation and temptation because you understand. We pray that you would be glorified in every heart. We pray that those that are here that have never repented and placed their faith in you, that today they would surrender their lives to you as Savior and Lord; that they would call out to you; that they would draw near to God through your great sacrifice, your blood. And Father, for those of us who do belong to you, may we give ourselves more and more completely, more and more joyfully, more and more worshipfully to you, and may Jesus Christ have to preeminence in every way. We pray this in his name. Amen.*