

"Mary – A Faithful Servant of the Lord"
Dec. 2, 2012

How did Mary demonstrate "great faith?"

1. She accepted her first priority was to be a servant of God.

"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to Your Word." (Lk. 1:38)

2. She resisted fear.

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." (Lk. 1:30)

3. She had a foundational belief in the character and power of God.

- He has power to give life.

"...the power of the Most High will overshadow you... For nothing will be impossible with God." (Lk. 1:35,37)

- He has the necessary power in His nature.

"For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name." (Lk. 1:49)

- He has power over His enemies.

"He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate." (Lk. 1:51-52)

4. She realized all the focus should be on Jesus.

"They saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him... they offered Him gifts..." (Matt. 2:11-12)

"My soul magnifies the Lord." (Lk. 1:46)

"My spirit rejoices in God my Savior." (Lk. 1:47)

Application:

1. Which aspect of Mary's great faith do you most appreciate? Which expression of faith do you need to strengthen in your walk with God?
2. Pray for your strength to grow this Christmas.

Bible Study Questions/ Discussion
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1. Discuss the two extreme viewpoints concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus. (On one side she is seen as perfect and one we should pray to and on the other side she is a woman without a unique "virgin birth." According to Luke 1:45 what is the special quality of Mary that we should remember?

2. How does Mary describe herself? (Lk. 1:38) What is necessary if you call yourself a servant of the Lord? (Mk. 3:35) Different than our images of slavery, how does the New Testament describe the disciple as a servant? (John 15:9,14; Matt. 11:28-30) In what way was Mary a "servant" of the Lord?

3. A faithful servant of the Lord has to resist fear. What does the angel say to Mary? (Lk. 1:30) How does fear hinder our serving of the Lord? What are the causes of fear in your life? What does Zechariah say about serving? (Lk. 1:74) Read Psalm 27:1 and Rom. 8:31 and clarify God's answer to our fears.

4. A faithful servant has a solid foundation of confidence in the character and power of God. What did the angel say to Mary about the power of God? (Lk. 1:35, 37) In Hebrews the author describes the human body of the Messiah using the same word for creation. (Heb. 10:5; 11:3) Discuss the miracle of the "virgin birth" and our faith in God as creator.

5. When we are serving Jesus we are serving the all powerful God. (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Mark 1:24; Psalm 111:9) How does knowing His power and authority change the attitude of the servant? What happens to the serving ability when the servant lacks confidence in their boss? How does Mary describe the power of the Messiah in Lk. 1:51-52? What enemies are you dealing with right now?

6. A faithful servant keeps the focus on the Lord not on themselves. Identify the "focus" in the arrival of the magi to the house where they were staying. (Matt. 2:11-12) Who received the worship? Who received the gifts? Discuss the many special things that can grab our attention at Christmas. Share some ideas on how to keep Christ the focus. (Col. 1:18; Lk. 1:46-47)