

“CHRISTmas is Calling”

Hope-Mary

Luke 1:26-38

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE> (Pentatonix, “Mary Did You Know?”)

Oh Mary, did you know? What did Mary know? This now classic Christmas song was written by Mark Lowry in 1984. Sung here by Pentatonix.

Mark Lowry said this about the writing of the song: “I just tried to put into words the unfathomable. I started thinking of the questions I would have for her if I were to sit down & have coffee with Mary. You know, “What was it like raising God?” “What did you know?” “What didn’t you know?”

There are 9 questions that Mary was asked in that song. And yet as has been read in the Gospel of Luke I find 9 things that Mary is told. 9 things that she *does* know.

9 things that Mary is told.

- 1. Mary you are favored. (vs. 28, 30)**
- 2. You will have a son. (vs. 31)**
- 3. You will call him Jesus.**
(Which is derived from the Hebrew name Yeshua, and means deliverer, rescuer.)
(vs. 31)
- 4. Your son will be great. ((vs. 32)**
- 5. He will be called the Son of the Most High. (vs. 32)**
- 6. He will be given the throne of His father David. (vs.32)**
- 7. He will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever. (vs. 32)**
- 8. His kingdom will never end. (vs 32)**
- 9. The Holy Spirit will come upon you. (vs.35)**

But, oh Mary, did you know that this child is the Hope of the world prophesized to be born to be that deliverer and rescuer.

Mary had a hope that she would conceive and have a child. Not only was that hope realized, but she literally carried HOPE. THE hope!!!

It is not unusual to hear words like, “You better hope so!” Or, “I hope so.” A hope is that expectation and desire for something to happen. Friends I have a hope and expectation and a desire for our community, state, nation and world to be a better place. I have a hope and expectation and desire that we as individuals can focus on those spiritual and kingdom issues and not be drawn away by the pettiness of the nitpicking of those in the world who like to argue, criticize and politicize. Where is our hope? Who is our hope? My hope is built is built in Jesus.

While suicides continue to rise, while depression and stress are major issues we deal with in our life, I believe that our world is crying out for hope. There is hope needed while waiting to get those results and biopsies back from the doctor. There is hope needed while your child faces bullying or peer pressure. There is hope needed so our youth doesn't get caught up in vaping, cutting, drinking, and drugs. Where is our hope? Who is our hope?

I believe our hope lies in this one Mary is carrying, conceived by the Holy Spirit. Old Testament prophecy identifies there is to be one that would be the anointed one. And yet talk about hopelessness. Between the last prophet, Malachi and the happenings of the New Testament there was a silence of around 400 years. Wow---where is God? Where is the hope?

In times of being spiritually dry. In times of being caught up in despair and hopelessness, please know God is not done yet. In the middle of the dry times. In the middle of times there seems like there is no hope. Hope will come.



So barren, so cracked, so dry, so hopeless----but wait----there is a bloom of hope.

I believe the people of Israel were waiting and waiting for hope. He was worth waiting for.

The prophet Isaiah says, **Isaiah 7:14 New International Version (NIV)** ¹⁴ **Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.**

A virgin, Mary. Next week we will talk about CHRISTmas Calling, Joseph, was told by the angel the quote from Isaiah 7:15. And Immanuel means God with us!!! God with us!!! HOPE !!!

Today we had the lighting of the first Advent Candle. Advent literally means "to come." We are preparing, anticipating celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That one light of hope makes a difference. It is a reminder of not only hope, but light.

Again, from the Old Testament: **Isaiah 60:1 New International Version (NIV)**
60 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

At around 40 days baby Jesus was taken to the temple. Simeon looked at this child and said, **Luke 2:30-32 New International Version (NIV)** ³⁰ **For my eyes have seen your salvation,**³¹ **which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:** ³² **a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."**

Notice Simeon from the Temple says a light to the Gentiles AND the glory of the people of Israel.

When there is darkness there is hopelessness. I love Christmas Eve. 4 services this year. Please 2, Communion, Candlelight, 4 pm Family, 7 Candlelight, 11 pm Candlelight Communion. I hope you will invite people. There are invitational cards to our Christmas Eve Services at the Welcome Center. Take several, hand them out. Invite people.

Each of those services will climax to our lighting of candles and spreading the light. Well, or 4 pm Family Service uses glow sticks. But they give off light. A light of hope, peace, joy, and love. There is something about Candlelight services that attract.

There is an over 100-year-old Swedish story about a country doctor who came to a farmhouse one night to help deliver a baby. As the mother labored on a kitchen table, her husband assisted the doctor by holding up a gas lamp to illuminate the makeshift delivery room. After a time of courageous labor, the mother delivered a fine baby boy. Then, to the surprise of both parents, the doctor announced that a second child was due to arrive. And indeed, the mother delivered a lovely daughter.

Her husband was already shaken by this unexpected turn of events so you can imagine his astonishment when he heard the doctor say, "Hang on. I think there's a third. I think we have triplets."

At this the father began to back out of the room. "Hold it!" Called the doctor. "Come back here with that lamp." "Oh, no," said the father. It's the light that attracts them."

Ah, but light *does* attract. Invite people not just to Christmas Eve, but also our current CHRISTmas is Calling series. Christ is calling people to Hope...and next week we will talk about Christ calling to peace. Anybody here need more peace? Do you know a neighbor that could benefit from hearing about peace? Invite them, as we light the candles of hope and peace.

With hope there is light! **John 1:4 New International Version (NIV)⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.** With light there is hope!!

In Advent we are preparing for the explosion of light for us to realize that our hope, peace, joy, and love is through this one who came to be born of Mary. This Son of the Most High, this Jesus, this Emmanuel, Savior, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Jesus, redeemer, rescuer, and deliverer.

John 1:9 New International Version (NIV) ⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

I love Christmas!!! I love Christmas Eve. Candlelight is such a favorite of mine. But I want you to notice something. *If everyone could stay seated, I'm going to ask for all the lights in the sanctuary be turned off.* You will see the 2 altar candles and the Advent Candle. 2 candles on the altar are always burning. One represents that Jesus is human, and God. 2 candles each Sunday representing the divinity and humanity of God.

And then there is this candle of Hope. Oh yes eventually we will light the candle of peace, joy, love, and the Christ Candle. But even today notice the light given off by this candle of hope.

John 1:5 New International Version (NIV) ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The light of hope. Jesus. Emmanuel. God with us. Rescuer and deliverer.

Yes, perhaps a preview of Christmas Eve when we take the light of Christ and share it with one another. And to take the light of hope and share it with the neighborhood. Light Attracts.

LIGHTS BACK ON

Hope is real. Sometimes it may not feel like it. We can push it aside. We can bury it. We can be cynical. We can be critical. But hope is real.



Where is our hope? Who is our hope? Our hope is that Jesus loves us and cares for us.

(11:05----play Advent Worship Hope 3 here)

<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/79190/advent-worship-3-hope>

Mary did not know a lot of things, but that teenage girl carried hope, real hope in her arms. It changed everything. Jesus did not come so that we could be the same. Jesus came to give us hope. Hope is real. Cling to that hope.

(11:05: There is hope for everyone. Do you hear it? Do you know the announcement? It's the Good News there there's hope for everyone. He lights the darkness. There's hope for you and your neighbors. There's hope for everyone.)

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.