

MARY'S HOPE | John 19:25-27; Luke 24:36-53; Acts 1:12-14 | 2024-12-22 | Geldart | Tru

1. Welcome & Announcements

- a. Merry almost Christmas, everyone!
- b. Connect Cards
- c. Giving
 - i. EOY Giving
- d. Xmas Eve Svc Tuesday 4pm – invite your friends
- e. Family Sunday next wk (which ages in CG?) – come in pjs
- f. Wear a Pair Share a Pair EOY Pizza Party & Movie
- g. EOY Survey – Take today

2. [1] The Tale of the Two Seeds

- a. Once upon a time, in a vast meadow, two seeds lay side by side, nestled in the soft, rich soil. It was late autumn, and the air was crisp with the promise of change. The seeds had fallen from their parent plants, their tiny forms wrapped in the earth's embrace, resting in the cool darkness.
- b. The first seed, named Thomas, was afraid. The darkness of the soil felt overwhelming, like a heavy blanket smothering him. "How will I ever grow?" he wondered. "I can't see the sun, and I don't know what lies ahead. What if the world above is too harsh for me? What if I'm too small, too fragile to survive?"
- c. Beside him lay another seed named Hope. Hope was curious and patient, her heart filled with quiet assurance. As she listened to Thomas's worries, she gently spoke, "I understand how you feel, Thomas. I, too, wonder about what lies beyond the darkness. But I believe that something beautiful awaits us. The soil may be dark, but it is also full of life and nourishment. The rain will come, and so will the warmth of the sun. We don't need to know everything now—we just need to trust that we are meant to grow."
- d. Thomas shivered, feeling even more uncertain. "But what if I fail? What if I can't find my way up to the light?" he asked, his voice trembling with fear.
- e. Hope smiled gently in the silence. "The light is there, just beyond the earth. It is always waiting for us. We only need to take the first step and trust that the journey is worth it."
- f. Days turned into weeks. The soil shifted with the winds, and the rains began to fall. Hope, despite her doubts, could feel the tug of the earth around her, urging her to grow. With a deep breath, she gathered all her courage and pushed against the darkness. She stretched her tiny roots into the soil, searching for nourishment, and then, with a quiet but firm resolve, she began to push upward, through the soil, toward the unknown.
- g. As she broke through the surface of the earth, the first rays of sunlight kissed her tender leaves. The warmth wrapped around her like a welcoming embrace, and for the first time, she felt the freedom of the open sky.
- h. Meanwhile, Thomas, still paralyzed by fear, remained deep in the soil. He could hear the birds singing above, and he could feel the gentle warmth of the sun reaching toward him, but he remained frozen. His worries held him captive. "What if I can't do it? What if the light burns me?" he thought.

- i. Seasons changed, and while Hope grew tall and strong, blooming into a vibrant flower that filled the meadow with color and fragrance, Thomas remained where he was, trapped in his doubts. He had never taken that leap of faith, never believed that growth was possible, and so he stayed buried in the soil, untouched by the beauty that awaited him.
 - j. Years passed, and the meadow flourished with life. The flowers swayed in the breeze, the birds sang their songs, and the trees whispered ancient secrets. Hope stood as a beautiful reminder to all who passed by that life was meant to be lived fully, that sometimes the darkest moments hold the greatest promise of transformation.
 - k. But Thomas, still in his place, had never known the joy of the sun, the thrill of growth, or the wonder of the world above. Eventually he told himself that none of it was real. There was no sun. There was no surface. All that truly was, was the darkness of his tiny world. And so, he remained—a seed, with potential unrealized, in the dark soil that had once offered him everything he needed to bloom.
3. [2] This Advent season, we've been in a sermon series looking at Mary as a model Servant of the Lord.
- a. We see it most clearly with that famous declaration to the Angel, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."
 - b. So far we've seen how she became a model both for Jesus and for us to emulate in her surrender, motherhood, and suffering.
 - c. [3] Today we're looking to model Mary's HOPE
 - d. Like the second seed, hope requires both trust and the courage to push through pain and uncertainty.
 - i. Sometimes, the path to growth feels too difficult, too unknown, and we're tempted to remain in the strange comfort of our doubts.
 - ii. Hope doesn't always see the path clearly, but it believes in the promise of growth and goodness.
 - iii. It knows that even in our darkest moments, there's a light awaiting us.
 - iv. Today, as we explore the hope of Jesus' mother, let's remember that hope is the foundational first step toward a life that blooms in ways we never imagined.

4. Pray

5. As we talked about last week, following God led to no small amount of suffering in her life.
- a. In the midst of all this, though, Mary clung to hope, even as it was severely tested.
 - i. And this testing will ultimately lead us to the place where Mary had an overwhelming experience with hope that bloomed – and can be ours as well!
 - b. Let's look at 2 pairs of scenes that illustrate this:

6. [4] Mary's hope was tested as she stood by her son, Jesus

- a. And so we'll tie this back in with the topic of suffering last week.
 - i. Hope really matters when it's tested
 - ii. It shows itself for what it truly is when you're going through pain, difficulty, fear, doubt, anxiety, despair, and all sorts of things that try to kill our hope and make us discouraged, cynical, and practically hopeless.

- But like that Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey song from the Prince of Egypt, “Though hope is frail, it’s hard to kill”

- b. [5] First, let’s look at **Matt 13:54 “and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?”**
- Now, imagine Mary. Her son, whom she knows to be the Messiah, is coming to teach in their local synagogue of Nazareth.
 - Remember that this is one of the smallest villages of Galilee.
 - She’s eager for Jesus to be revealed for who he really is.
 - You may remember the wedding at Cana where she seemed to pressure Jesus into performing a miracle
 - So, this is the big day when people will get to hear and see, in their hometown, what her son is all about.
 - What a great day! What a hopeful day!
 - There’s something about that dynamic of a parent, especially in a little nothing town, saying, “My child is something. Just wait until you hear them.”
 - But, assuming she’s in attendance, and I do believe she was, Mary is about to hear her son’s name in a way I’m sure she didn’t expect.
 - [6] Matt 13:55 -- ⁵⁵ Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?”**
 - Now, what they should have said was, “Praise the Lord! The words of the prophet Isaiah have come true.
 - God has made glorious the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, here in Galilee of the nations.
 - We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light.
 - We who have lived in deep darkness—on us light has shined.”
 - THE SEED THAT HAS LAIN SO LONG IN DARKNESS - Our long awaited hope now springs anew!
 - But no. Look at v. 57.
 - [7] Matt 13:57-58 - ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.” ⁵⁸ And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.**
 - Instead of being the seed of HOPE, they turned out to be the seed of Doubt – Thomas!
 - This is NOT what Mary had hoped for – nor Jesus.
- c. **[8] Mary’s Hope was tested as she stood by Jesus**
- Even in the midst of a lack of support from those closest to her
 - At this point, there was no huge community of followers of Jesus.
 - There were a handful of disciples and crowds that were drawn to the parables and the miracles.

- There was no women's ministry that encouraged her in her relationship with Jesus.
 - No LIFE Group to walk with her through thick and thin
- iv. She just had Jesus.
 - v. She didn't even have the support of her other kids at this point in her life.
 - V 57 indicates Jesus said not only was he dishonored and disbelieved by the townspeople, but also by his own household. His brothers and sisters!
 - John 7:5 says that his brothers did not believe in him.
 - His brothers and sisters may have believed that he was out of his mind.
 - vi. I think it was one of those moments where, for Mary, it's like, "This doesn't look like the song I sang!"
 - vii. You know the song that she sang right after being with her cousin, Elizabeth?
 - viii. We call it the Magnificat
 - It's incredible! Magnificent!
 - As some have referred to her, she really is the first Christian theologian with a beautifully developed theology of what the Messiah would accomplish.
 - Her song says things like, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly."
 - All these very correct things about the Messiah, but they don't include the part about the Messiah being despised and rejected – and suffering for the sins of the people (that was kept hidden from all, including Mary)
 - ix. So, it's fair to say that, when she sees her son being publicly shamed, she's thinking, "Come on, son. I know who you are. It's time to get on with the casting down the mighty from their thrones. Lift up the lowly."
 - Let's get this revolution started, defeat Rome, and establish God's reign in the land again."
 - That was the hope for her son that she knew.
 - That was the vision (correct, just incomplete) that she had.
 - So, it's no wonder she's waiting for him showing concern.
 - ***As Mary stands by her son as he is being ridiculed and rejected, her hope is being tested, plain and simple.***
- d. Fast forward two or three years later to what we call "the triumphal entry."
- i. This is the moment where Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy about the Messiah, He's finally claiming who he is – OUT LOUD -- and people are recognizing him all over the city as the rightful king–David's heir.
 - ii. It's the moment that everyone who followed Jesus had been waiting for.
 - iii. And yes, based on what I read in the accounts from that week, Mary was there in Jerusalem with her son on that last week we call Holy Week.
 - iv. She must have been thinking, "This is finally it. They see now. He's the King Messiah. It's a matter of time. MY HOPES ARE FINALLY COMING TRUE!"

- v. But you know that Mary will witness things take a quite different turn that week.
- vi. All within days of the triumphal entry Jesus would be arrested and condemned by the Religious leaders. It wasn't what she'd hoped for either.

7. [9] Mary's hope was tested as she saw Jesus crucified. As she witnessed the agonizing death of her son on the cross.

- a. You see, the manger was an unexpected revelation.
 - i. This is how a king is revealed?
- b. But it ultimately led to the unexpected revelation of the king on a cross.
- c. John 19 tells us that she was there, right at the foot of the cross.
- d. Mary saw what many would interpret as hope dashed and shattered.
 - i. Strained to the breaking point
 - ii. Perhaps the ultimate test of the hope of any who put their trust in Him
- e. When he made that final cry from the cross, "It is finished," those witnessing it, including his own mother, were trying to process what that meant.
 - i. "We know he is the hope of Israel."
 - ii. We know his name is salvation.
 - iii. But our Hope – the Messiah - JUST DIED... What now?
 - iv. Before we talk about how hope shined on them again, let me just ask you...

8. [10] Reflection Question: How have you seen life's circumstances testing your hope in God and his goodness? Are there situations where you feel it has died altogether?

- a. Mary didn't experience the immediate glory of the resurrection of her son.
- b. There were three dark days that she would have to endure.
 - i. 3 Days where Jesus's body was buried – like a seed - in the ground.
 - ii. Where her heart was broken, and what was left of her hope seemed to leak out and get lost in the dust
 - iii. Three days to sit and contemplate what hope means now, now that all seemed lost.
- c. Maybe that's where your soul is today.
- d. I want you to know that it's okay for church, and even at Christmastime, to be a time where you can sit in that place. That place of doubt, fear. Anger. Hopelessness.
 - i. It is entirely appropriate
 - ii. God is still present while hope feels buried.
 - Like a seed that died in the dirt.
 - iii. Like Mary, maybe those closest to you aren't walking this road with you right now, and that hurts. You feel alone.
 - iv. Maybe that's why you're here because you didn't know where else to turn.
 - v. Jesus meets you at the point where it feels your hope has run out.
 - vi. As I read the Bible, God just has this funny way of showing up at those exact moments. You see...

9. [11] Mary's hope was not extinguished even when her son died.

- a. Though hope seems frail, it's hard to kill.
- b. The Gospel accounts don't detail exactly where Mary was at what times after the resurrection.

- c. What we can know for sure is that she was a part of the group that obeyed Jesus' post-resurrection instructions to go and pray in Jerusalem.
- d. What I infer from that is that she was almost certainly a part of the group who heard the instructions. I believe we have recorded in Luke 24 where...
- e. **Mary experienced the hope of the resurrection.**

f. [12] Luke 24:36-53:

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to [13] eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, [14] beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

- g. It says that those gathered were the 11 (that's the eleven disciples left after Judas betrayed Jesus) and their companions.
- h. Two disciples and Simon Peter were talking about how the Lord had appeared to them.
- i. Mary was most certainly still among the companions who had been with Jesus in Jerusalem and all the way up until his death and burial.
- j. So, then Jesus appeared in their midst.
 - i. The resurrected Christ doesn't need you to invite him into the room.
- k. He then proceeds to have a Bible study with them explaining how the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead.
 - i. To be buried like a seed, and then to rise to new life.
- l. The dots are connecting for many of them for the first time.
- m. And yet I just doubt seriously that Mary was that focused on the Bible study.
 - i. No doubt, she understood it, but I believe she connected the dots as soon as she saw her son.

- n. I believe she's simply experiencing the rebirth of hope in her.
 - i. We know she is a person who went deep inward—had a deep inner life.
 - ii. I believe as she sees her son teaching his disciples again, she is going through the internal treasury again, and all the guideposts along the way that were helping instruct her were all convening at this one moment where hope is reborn.
 - iii. A deep inner healing is happening in that room.
- o. Did you know that when a baby is growing in its mother's womb, medical researchers have discovered that fetal cells enter a mother's bloodstream and play an active role in healing tissue in her organs that need repair.
 - i. God's design is so beautiful that, these cells are so adaptable, they can go to her liver and become liver cells to repair her liver tissue, or go to her heart and become heart muscle cells.
 - ii. He said they can even cross the "blood-brain barrier and turn into neurons."
- p. As a baby in Mary's womb, just following the natural order of God's design, Jesus was actively healing his mother.
 - i. But through his death and resurrection, he was bringing salvation and spiritual healing to her.
 - ii. Resurrecting her hope in God! Bringing what was dead back to glorious life.
- q. And Mary behaves exactly as one who has had her hope restored as...

10. [15] Mary's hope empowered her to wait expectantly for the promise of the Holy Spirit

- a. **Remember**, I pointed out that she was among those who heard Jesus' instructions from Luke 24 to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father.
- b. And that's where we find her in **Acts 1:14**
- c. **[16] This time, her name is stated explicitly among the disciples. It says, "All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers."**
- d. Hope was restored.
 - i. Even Jesus' brothers now believed.
- e. Why?
 - i. Well, if you have a hard time believing your brother is the Messiah, his rising from the dead will pretty much seal it for you.
 - ii. His family is there now.
- f. Mary is waiting in hope for the promise her son made.
- g. Hope is not merely our best guess about what might happen.
 - I HOPE This sermon is nearly over
 - ii. Nor is hope just wishful thinking.
 - I hope it'll snow for Christmas this year
 - iii. Or a fool's desire for things to be different in spite of all evidence
 - I hope I pass this exam even though I chose not to study --- like at all.
 - iv. Biblical Hope is a confident expectation for God's goodness to play out in the end..... based on evidence.

- v. **[17] Heb 11: Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.**
 - Our faith is inextricably linked to our hope!
 - Faith itself is the CONFIDENCE in what we hope for
- vi. And hope is not only an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, but it's perhaps the end goal of our Christian maturity process.
 - It's the visible evidence – the blooming flower from the seed of possibility
- vii. **[18] Romans 5:3-5 ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**
- h. Mature Believers are marked by hope – forged in the fires of suffering through changing our character to be more like Christ.
 - i. And we can only withstand this because THE HS pours the love of the Father directly into our hearts!
- i. So when we talk about Mary waiting in HOPE for the promise her son made, THIS is what we're taking about.
- j. She was a part of that group "in one mind and one accord" on the Day of Pentecost that experienced the promise of the Holy Spirit that her son told her would come.
- k. She waited for that promise with such confident expectation because she now knew (like all of us can know), that not even death can squash our hope in Jesus.
- l. **The hope of Christmas is ultimately the hope of the resurrection.**

11. [18] Reflection Question: Where do you need to ask God, right now, for resurrection hope to break through what seems impossible?

- a. Maybe it's your marriage
 - i. Or your kids
 - ii. Or the devastation of an illness
 - iii. Or the death of a loved one
 - iv. Or your inability to have kids
 - v. Maybe you're still single and yet long to be married.
 - vi. Or stuck in the clutches of your addictions and as the years go by, you're losing hope that you'll ever be free.
 - vii. I can resonate with feeling like most of those on that list at different times in my life.
- b. Let's begin to bring those situations and circumstances to the Lord.
- c. If a dead man in the ground for three days was not hopeless, surely your situation is not hopeless.
- d. You don't have to remain in your doubt
- e. Remember that Jesus resurrected you out of the pit of your sin and has given you new life.
- f. Let's proclaim that this new life is for everyone here today if you will place your faith where Mary placed hers.

12. We have a choice in the matter.

- a. Will we be like Thomas, the seed who let fear hold his heart, and chose to remain in the dirt, buried with his hope that God could be trusted to bring anything good. Trusting your eyes that all the world is darkness.
- b. Or will you be like the seed of HOPE, who embraces the reality of your pain and doubt, and yet moves forward anyways, trusting that at the end, just above your head, the Light of God beckons you forward into beauty and glory untold.
- c. Which seed will you be?
 - i. The good news is that even if you've been Thomas, you can BECOME hope, at any time. Even this morning.
 - ii. Thomas – the disciple – was not in the room when JC appeared to his disciples.
 - iii. And John 20 tells us that he doubted. He refused to believe. "I WILL NOT BELIEVE unless I see and touch him myself."
 - iv. Like the seed that refused to grow, Thomas the disciple doubted strongly.
 - v. And he could have stayed there. In fact JC didn't appear again for more than a week!
 - vi. But when he did, Thomas was there, and Jesus graciously gave him another chance to believe. He said see and touch. Don't doubt, believe!
 - vii. And even Doubting Thomas, chose to stretch out his hand, and believed. Hope sprang anew, as he said "MY SAVIOR AND MY GOD."

13. [19] Bottom Line for Today: Mary's life teaches us that hope is unshakable when it is anchored in Jesus.

- a. And that goes to the very heart of the Christian faith.
- b. And the core of the hope of Christmas.
 - i. Both Christmas 1, as humanity awaited our savior to come. The celebration we continue today that our God Himself chose to step down, become flesh and blood, and give himself as a ransom for our very souls.
 - ii. And Christmas 2, as we await the return of Jesus, our brother and king, to raise us to resurrected life and make everything sad come untrue.

14. [20] Reflection Questions

- a. Question: How have you seen life's circumstances testing your hope? Are there situations where you feel it has died altogether?
- b. Question: Where do you need to ask God, right now, for resurrection hope to break through what seems impossible?
- c. What's your next step of faith in response to this sermon today?

15. [21] Pray

The Tale of The Two Seeds





MARY

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD



MARY'S

H O P E



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H O P E

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Matthew 13:54-58

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Reflection Question

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Luke 24:36-53

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MARY'S

H O P E

empowered her to wait for the Spirit.

Acts 1:14

All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.



Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.



Reflection Question

Where do you need to ask God, right now, for resurrection hope to break through what seems impossible?





MARY'S

L I F E T E A C H E S U S T H A T
H O P E

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Reflections & Applications

1. How have you seen life's circumstances testing your hope? Are there situations where you feel it has died altogether?
2. Where do you need to ask God, right now, for resurrection hope to break through what seems impossible?
3. What's your next step of faith in response to this sermon today?





MARY

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD