



Introduction

We're in a series of messages called *Christmas for Everyone*. In this series we're looking at the original Christmas story through the eyes of four different people who experienced the arrival of Jesus in different ways. When we do this, we see that the message of the Christmas is truly for everyone. In this second message we're looking through the eyes of Mary to learn how the Christmas story reveals that God gives grace to the humble.

To watch this week's sermon before your group discussion, go to www.journeyoffaith.com/messages

Share Your Story

1. What's a funny or awkward time you felt stuck and had no idea what to do next?
2. When in the Christmas season, are you more inclined to focus on the cultural aspects of it or the biblical reason behind all the lights, presents, and get-togethers?

Hear God's Story

1. After learning of her pregnancy of Jesus by an angel, Mary met with her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant with John the Baptist. (Pause now, and read what she said in Luke 1:46-55.) Mary came from a poor family and was a religious and ethnic minority. Living in a patriarchal culture under the Roman Empire, she was expected to remain uneducated and live and die in obscurity. How does this context help frame for you what she says here about God giving grace to the humble?
2. Reread Luke 1:51-52. Mary knew that the arrival of Jesus was God getting ready to rescue His people in a new way. The proud will be brought down, and those without power will be shown mercy. Our inclination when we read this here is to look outward to "those" people who do injustice. But, Mary was also saying that God will rescue us from ourselves if we allow Him to. What's one area of control, pride, or unhealthy power that you can surrender to Jesus this Christmas?
3. Reread Luke 1:53, then what Jesus said in Luke 4:18-19. We see here that the true Jesus has a special heart for hurting people. What does this truth bring up for you?

Create a New Story

1. How can you better internalize Jesus' mission of mercy in your own life this week?
2. Think of someone you can reach out to this week who may feel left out. What practical action steps can you take to help them feel included in God's love?

Further Studies: Christmas - Ushering in a New Era

Mary's words about God recorded in Luke 1:46-56 link with what Jesus said about Himself in Luke 4:18-19. When Jesus said what He said there He was speaking to a bunch of religious leaders, and quoting from the prophet Isaiah from years back who was proclaiming what the mission of the Messiah would be all about when He arrived.

Pause here and read Isaiah 61:1-3, then Luke 4:16-21.

In sum, in Isaiah we see that the expected Messiah would "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor," heralding a new era of untold blessing and causing those burdened with a "faint spirit" to come alive with praise. Further, He will bring stability and godliness to the lives of believing hearers, that God may "be glorified." Then Jesus came onto the scene and said boldly, "Here I am! The era you'd been expecting is here." ..WHAT.. Mic drop.

In the season we call Christmas we remember, reflect, and celebrate this astounding reality that God came down to us. And not only that, but we see that He was also faithful to what God said centuries beforehand that the Messiah would be all about.

Do you feel heavily burdened? Are you weighed down with stress? Do you feel alone? Do you feel unloved? If so, the message of Christmas is especially for you. God sees you, came for you, and loves you dearly. The crazy thing though is that He then tells us, "Now, go and model my heart to others around you who are also hurting."

DISCUSS

1. How does all of this help reframe the Christmas season for you?
2. What new thing does this bring up for you about the heart of God?
3. What action step is God placing upon your heart to take in light of all of this?
4. How can you organize your day better to reflect on this reality even when the Christmas season passes?

For Parents: Repackaging for Youth

1. For those who have young children in the home, what are some ways you could teach this lesson to them that takes into account their age and learning level?

For questions about this curriculum, contact Pastor Matthew Jensen at matthew.jensen@journeyoffaith.com