



TELLING THE STORIES SERIES – MARY, THE NURTURING MOTHER

PASTOR BRIAN FLEWELLING

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WORSHIP

Begin your group with a time of worship. If someone in your group can lead worship, invite them to lead two or three songs. Alternatively, consider using one or more of these songs from our Sunday morning worship time:

- **Angels (Glory to God)** (*Phil Wickham*)
- **O Come All Ye Faithful** (*Passion*)
- **Noel** (*Chris Tomlin*)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Luke 2:1-40

OPENING PRAYER

Begin your time together by inviting God's presence and asking Him to help you treasure and ponder what He wants to reveal to your group tonight.

Ice Breaker (5-10 min)

Share a meaningful Christmas memory from your childhood. What made it special, and why has it stayed with you?

KEY TAKEAWAYS (5 mins)

1. The Mystery of God's Smallness - God chose to enter the world in the most humble, vulnerable way possible—as a baby dependent on human care.
2. Treasuring What God Is Doing - Mary's response wasn't to fully understand, but to preserve, prioritize, and ponder what God was doing in her life.
3. The Power of Seeds - Small things from God have transformative power, but we can easily discard, neglect, or miss them if we're not paying attention.
4. Adoring the Mystery - Faith sometimes means bowing to what we don't fully understand and trusting God's work even when it defies our adult need to control and comprehend.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (35-40 min)

Understanding the Sermon

1. Pastor Brian mentioned that Mary "treasured" and "pondered" these things in her heart. What does it mean practically to treasure something spiritually? How is this different from just remembering it?
2. The sermon emphasized that "the infinite God comes to us so small and so subtle that we can miss it." When have you almost missed something, important God was doing because it seemed too small or ordinary?
3. What does the vulnerability of God coming as a baby teach us about His character and His approach to relationship with us?

Going Deeper

4. Pastor Brian said, "The very thing that has the power to transform you, you have the power to throw away, to disregard, to waste, to dismiss." What "seeds" from God might you be in danger of discarding right now? (Examples: a prompting to reconcile, a new spiritual discipline, a word of encouragement, etc.)
5. Mary didn't understand everything happening to her, yet she cooperated with God's plan. Share about a time when you had to trust God without understanding the full picture. What was that experience like?
6. The sermon mentions that "to enter into his Father's kingdom, we have to become like little children." What adult sensibilities (need to control, understand, regulate, protect, achieve) do you struggle most to release in your faith journey?

Personal Application

7. Mary nurtured what God gave her even though it was mysterious and costly. What is God asking you to nurture right now—a relationship, a calling, a spiritual practice, a dream? How can you be more intentional about this?
8. The sermon states, "It's not his power that makes him so different, but his love." How does focusing on God's love rather than just His power change the way you approach Him or represent Him to others?
9. What does it look like practically to "adore the mystery in silence" in our noisy, information-saturated world? What would need to change in your daily rhythm to create space for this?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION (10 Mins)

Choose one or two of these to commit to this week:

- **Treasure Practice:** Start a "treasure journal" where you write down moments, words, or experiences where you sense God at work. Review it weekly to see patterns and growth.
- **Seed Inventory:** Identify one "seed" God has planted in your life recently (a prompting, idea, relationship, opportunity). What's one specific action you can take this week to nurture it rather than neglect it?
- **Childlike Trust:** Identify one area where you're trying to control or fully understand before moving forward. Practice releasing it to God daily, saying "I don't understand this, but I want to walk in the way of love."
- **Silence and Wonder:** Schedule 15 minutes three times this week to sit in silence before God, simply "adoring the mystery" without asking for anything or trying to figure anything out.
- **Mary's Example:** Like Mary, have a conversation with God about something mysterious He's doing in your life. Tell Him honestly what you don't understand, then ask Him to help you treasure it anyway.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray together, inviting each person to:

- Thank God for one "seed" or mystery He's planted in their life
- Ask for grace to treasure what God is doing rather than dismiss it
- Request childlike faith to trust His love even when they don't understand