

Mary, the Loyal Mother

Devotional Reading: Revelation 12:1–6

Background Scripture: Luke 1:26–56; 2:15–19; John 2:1–5; 19:25–27

Today's Scripture: Luke 2:15–19; John 2:1–5; 19:25–27

I. Mother's Amazement

Luke 2:15–19

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

15. A group of *shepherds* receive a heavenly visitation. It is the third time an angelic messenger appears in Luke's narrative (Luke 1:11–20; 1:26–38; 2:9–13). These declare a Savior newly born.

As the *angels* return to *heaven*, the shepherds deduce that the city mentioned is *Bethlehem*. They decide to seek out the sign and *go* and *see* the Christ child. They recognize that the message they've received came from the *Lord*.

16. A *manger* is a feeding trough for cattle. Mary and Joseph used it as a crib out

of necessity. What a strange sign for the shepherds to receive! Yet it proves to them the identity of Jesus, the infant Lord.

17. The shepherds' sight of the baby in the manger is enough to confirm what they heard from the angels. Immediately, they become evangelists, spreading the good news to the surrounding towns and villages.

18. The shepherds' witness is effective. People hear and respond. The story the shepherds tell includes heavenly messengers, unlikely recipients, incredible directions, and a humble infant Savior lying in a feeding trough. The story sounds far-fetched, but it is accurate and makes the hearers marvel.

19. In contrast, *Mary* stays quiet. Like creating an interior scrapbook, she takes mental notes of each moment, memory, and visitor as she experiences God's plan unfolding. Mary considers the miracle of it *all* and then tucks the memories away in her *heart*.

Imagine the things Mary *pondered*: angels, visions, dreams, her husband's obedience, a miraculous pregnancy and subsequent birth, tales of more angels, and shepherds who know what she knows—this is no ordinary baby!

II. Mother's Request

John 2:1–5

1 And the third day there was a

marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

1. John 1 expresses the beginning of Jesus' ministry from an external perspective, focusing on Him as an adult coming into the fullness of His ministry. John 2 turns to the vantage point of Jesus' mother, who has intimately known Him all His life.

The *mother of Jesus* (who is never specifically named in John's Gospel) attends a wedding in Cana, a small town less than 10 miles from Nazareth. Her attendance at the event makes it probable that she has a family connection with someone in the wedding party. Jesus' mother's presence serves as essential background information for the episode that follows.

2. If Mary is related to the bride or groom, Jesus is too. Therefore, Jesus' presence may be a family expectation at the event. Jesus' *disciples* are present with Him. Thus far in John's Gospel, we know that the band of disciples includes Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and the unnamed disciple of John the Baptist. The unnamed disciple might be John the Evangelist, the author of this Gospel. If John is present, then it is likely that his brother, James, is in attendance too.

Weddings in first-century Judea lasted for seven days after the bride and groom finalized their vows. The invitation to this *marriage* was not to an afternoon ceremony but rather an extensive feast. Those *called* to the celebration could

expect an abundant time of joy, food, wine, desserts, music, and dancing at the groom's family home. Jesus and His disciples accept the invitation to participate.

3. A near catastrophe occurs: the *wine* runs out. Since the customs of honor and status naturally led to comparisons with other families and local wedding celebrations, no bridegroom wanted to be considered miserly for scrimping on the event. Tradition and public image pushed wedding feasts toward extravagance. The tendency would be to provide a lavish experience that made others in the village consider the bridegroom a generous provider. As in any era, communities have long corporate memories! The host (the groom's family) was responsible for providing all food and drink for the duration of the celebration. To fail to do so was shameful. Therefore, a shortage of wine was an embarrassing problem!

Jesus' *mother* informs Him of the situation, and her message conveys more than simple information—it bears weight, urgency, and concern with the reputation of her family and friends. Some commentators think Mary wants *Jesus* and His company to leave to minimize the family's embarrassment.

4. Jesus responds in three parts. First, He acknowledges His mother as *Woman*. This designation sounds disrespectful to modern ears, but it was not inappropriate to refer to a lady in this manner in the first century.

Second, He asks a question. The Greek phrase underlying the translation *what have I to do with thee?* is an idiomatic expression used in both the Old and New Testaments. It can function as a stern rebuke (Judges 11:12). It can also be a neutral equivalent to, "What does this have to do with me?" (2 Samuel 16:10; 2 Kings 3:13). The question builds on His reference to His mother as "Woman." As

Jesus begins a new season of life and ministry, every relationship is transformed. With His mission before Him, His blood relations become secondary.

Third, Jesus refers to His *hour*. The term refers to the moment when Jesus' complete identity will be revealed, His passion undergone, and His glory exposed. Jesus mentions this "hour" at critical moments in His personal life.

5. Despite Jesus' brusque response, Mary is not dissuaded. She trusts that Jesus will do something helpful. Mary instructs the household *servants* to follow Jesus' lead. During large celebrations such as these, the bridegroom might hire a coordinator or steward to manage the event. Mary speaks to those serving the household and guests, behind the scenes. Although her words are specific to the situation, they hold the key to Christian discipleship; it is wisdom to *do* the things Jesus says to do! You never know when a miracle may be right around the corner.

Mary shows great faith in Jesus and plays a significant role in the first miracle of His public ministry. Jesus goes on to turn six pots of water into wine—"good wine" (John 2:10). Jesus' glory—His divinity—manifests in this miracle. Those who follow Him grow in belief (2:11).

III. Mother's Future

John 19:25–27

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

25. Near to Jesus' *cross*, several women gather. Matthew's Gospel states that the women were there to minister to Jesus, poised to care for His needs (Matthew 27:55–56). The women had followed Jesus from Galilee. Luke's Gospel adds the detail that the women "bewailed and lamented" Jesus. What a difficult scene for Jesus' *mother*! Yet she stands in solidarity with Him, enduring.

26. Here, John mentions another disciple: the one *whom* Jesus *loved*. It is very common to identify this disciple as John himself. The "beloved disciple," as many endearingly refer to him, is mentioned at a few key points throughout John's Gospel. Most famously, the one "whom Jesus loved" leaned against Jesus at the Passover table and had a conversation with Him about Jesus' betrayer (John 13:23–26).

Seeing the two figures together, Jesus addresses his *mother*. Then He asks Mary to see (*behold*) or consider this *disciple* a *son*.

27. Jesus turns His attention to the *disciple*. This man is to *see* (behold) or consider Mary his *mother*.

More important than identifying the disciple's name who is "standing by" (John 19:26) is to reflect on Jesus' words to him. This man takes Jesus' saying as a direct order and obediently accommodates Jesus' mother's care. From this moment, the two are asked to think about each other as family; Mary gains a *home*.

Jesus' request is at least partially a practical measure. Jesus' (legal, but not biological) father, Joseph, is likely no longer living. Therefore, as the eldest son, Jesus is responsible for His mother's care. We do not know why Jesus asks someone outside His immediate family to look out for Mary because we do know Jesus has other brothers. What is clear, however, is Jesus' love for both the disciple and His mother. He desires to see them in a supportive relationship. As Mary loses one son, she gains another.

Involvement Learning

Mary, the Loyal Mother

Into the Lesson

Find three photographs on your cell phone that represent significant moments with a loved one. What significant memories are associated with each picture?

Photo 1: _____

Photo 2: _____

Photo 3: _____

Photographs don't tell the whole story of our lives, but they can hold memories of people and events that impacted, changed, and defined us. In today's lesson, we're going to consider glimpses—metaphorical photographs or snapshots—of a very special relationship.

Into the Word

Read Luke 2:15–19. How would you explain the phrase: “kept all these things.”

Key Text

Mary kept all these things,
and pondered them in her heart.
—Luke 2:19

How and why do we keep precious moments in our lives?

Imagine how Mary might have done this in her time and culture.

Read John 2:1–5. Write a short script of the dialogue between Mary and Jesus. Consider how ordinary people might try to resolve, complain, or worry about the lack of wine at the wedding feast.

Read John 19:25–27. What does this text reveal about what was important to Jesus?

Into Life

Life can be full of unexpected twists and turns. Mary's steadfast dedication to trusting God through all things models strong faith.

Write a prayer of trust in Jesus, expressing faith amidst uncertainty in their present life circumstances.

Thought to Remember

Loyalty to Jesus means a life
of sacrificial love.