

MARY: A SONG OF TRUST

Trust In The Uncertainty And The Unknown

LUKE 1:26-48

1) What were the similarities and differences between Zechariah and Mary?

- What are some first steps for questions and doubts?

2) What is trust based on? What makes Mary's trust not blind?

- What about God's character and nature did Mary trust?

3) Mary's story of trust

- How did her trust lead her to adoration?

QUESTIONS AND SCRIPTURE FOR FURTHER STUDY THIS WEEK

In Mary's case disgrace was imposed. She was to become an unwed mother.

She was "betrothed" to Joseph (Luke 1:27), a legally binding commitment to live with a man and create a family with him once proper preparation (sometimes lasting more than a year) had been made. During this time, however, the legal commitment was not consummated sexually. As the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia described it, "The term 'betrothal' in Jewish law must not be understood in its modern sense; that is, the agreement of a man and a woman to marry, by which the parties are not, however, definitely bound, but which may be broken or dissolved without formal divorce. Betrothal or engagement such as this is not known either to the Bible or to the Talmud."

Joseph wasn't quite sure what to do with the news that his betrothed, virgin wife was pregnant. Being "a righteous man," he understood the Torah's condemnation of adultery as sin (Deut. 22:20-24), but as a loving almost-husband, he didn't want to see Mary exposed to public humiliation, to see her "put to shame" (Matt. 1:19).

The Greek term for "put to shame" or "disgraced" means literally "to make an example." The idea is that were Joseph to divorce Mary, he would have been holding her out as an example of an adulteress and probably not only ruined her chance of ever marrying but also condemned her to a life of isolation and possible impoverishment. Not knowing what to do, as a man of honour and of love, Joseph "resolved to 'send her away'" —to annul their marriage commitment—"quietly."

Then, as recorded by Matthew:

An angel of the Lord appeared to (Joseph) in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son; and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son; and he called his name Jesus. (Matthew 1:20-25)

Joseph "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." A righteous man, indeed: like the Son to whom he would be an adoptive father, Joseph "despised the shame" (Heb. 12: 2) attendant to complete obedience to the will of God. Unconcerned with the scorn of ignorant, hostile people, Joseph's focus on complete submission to God's will and plan deserves not only our admiration but also our emulation.

The misunderstanding of at least some of his religious leaders and social peers mattered as nothing to Joseph compared to being an instrument of realizing God's plan for human salvation. And how could Mary not love a man who embraced, deliberately and without hesitation, profound social disapproval out of love for his Lord and his soon to-be wife?

Elizabeth's disgrace was removed; Mary's was placed upon her. But both knew the joy of something far richer: the grace of a loving, present, and personal God, which each of them embraced without vacillation. Elizabeth and Mary, Zechariah and Joseph, enfolded eagerly in the love of the Father. And the world has never been the same.

Taken from: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/two-disgraced-women-who-changed-the-world>