

Voices in Jesus' Story - Mary
Scripture: Luke 1:26-33
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(enter together)

(both Marys together) **I am Mary, the wife of Joseph, the mother of Jesus. I am Mary, a poor girl who got invited into an amazing adventure.** *(separate and move to opposite sides of chancel – young Mary standing, other Mary sitting at foot of cross)*

And it all began with a baby in my womb.

There are some women who don't like to talk of their time with a child in their womb. There are some who were disgusted and frustrated by those nine months each time they happened. There are some who just think it's silly to even think about. "Wasted reminiscences," they say, "Go on, get on with today." But I like to remember.

Not that all nine months were easy. No, in fact, not much was. The first inkling I had that something was happening was when I started getting sick.

Everyday I'd wake up and when I would smell the pot mother had on to boil, a wave of nausea would come over me. I would have liked nothing but to go back to bed, but that wasn't an option. No, water needed to be brought up from the well. Gardens and animals needed to be tended. My little brothers and sisters needed to be watched out for. The men needed to eat. No matter how I felt, life went on and so did work.

Of course, what it took me a while to figure out is that it wasn't only my life that was going on, but that there was another life inside me. I remember the first day I felt him move. Just a little flutter. I wasn't even sure it was anything other than queasiness rearing its head again. But I remembered the words of the angel, that I would conceive a son, and I wondered. And, as scary as it was, there was something in me that hoped.

Soon the movement began with more frequency and more power and it was undeniable. This was my child making his presence known. This was really happening.

At first, when I could feel him, when I knew for sure he was there, I kept it to myself. We didn't talk about such things too freely in my time. I didn't want to be thought a silly girl.

But even more than that it was something I wasn't sure I was ready to share. After all, for just a time he was mine alone. I know that may sound silly. After all, he was always God's. But, for just a little while I felt like I had all the power in the world in my womb and that feeling – that power, that intimacy, that connection to my son – was something I wasn't ready to share.

Maybe it was because of what that angel had said to me, telling me that my child would make a difference to the world, maybe I knew that he wouldn't really be mine for long. I'm not sure, but for a while I just wanted to protect the connection that I alone experienced. I wanted to keep him to myself for just a little while longer.

But before too long I had to share it. I couldn't help myself. And it was Joseph who needed to know. I remember his face the day I first told him. I had felt Jesus kicking and ran off to find Joseph at work, leaving the garden to tend itself. At first he thought something must

be wrong – my seeking him out in the middle of the day at work was neither normal nor acceptable behavior. But then he saw my face and he knew that I came with joy.

I looked deep into his eyes and said, “The baby – I can feel him.” And I saw his eyes fill with the deepest love and greatest pride I’ve ever seen in another human being. Joseph wasn’t a very expressive man, but in that fleeting moment I knew that he was as excited as I was and that he would be a good father.

Over the course of those nine months, especially the later months, I found myself too often standing still, arms wrapped around my belly, waiting for his movements as if waiting for messages from God. I found myself dreaming of who this child would be, what life would be like for this little one, what the message from the angel meant – what kind of kingdom could my child have? I wondered. And yet, I couldn’t even imagine.

When Jesus did make his debut, there in that borrowed barn, I couldn’t have asked for anything better. As those who have given birth know, there was nothing easy or romantic about the hours and moments leading up to his arrival. And yet, when I saw his little face, when I looked into his eyes, when I took him to my breast, I could imagine nothing better than the moment I was in right then. I could imagine nothing greater that I was created to do than to love and nurture this child.

(both Marys together) **And now I think back and I long for those days.** *(pregnant Mary sits)*

I long for those days when I could hold him and protect him...when it seemed that nothing could hurt him. I long for those days because they are far gone and now I know how much hurt we can cause one another...how much damage we can do.

I know because I no longer cradle my son in my arms...instead I watch him dying a horrible death...death on a cross...as if he were a criminal.

(stand and step away from cross as continue on angrily)

And for what? What did he do that warrants such punishment? What did he do that should result in such pain? What did he do?

(move toward center of chancel, reminiscing)

You know, there has always been something special about Jesus. From the time he was a small child he commanded attention, he drew people in, not with boldness but with wisdom and insight. He has always had a special ability to pay attention to people, to see who they really are, to look into their eyes and look straight to their soul. He has always been especially close to God. It’s like nothing else I’ve ever seen. Yes, we raised him to be a good Jewish boy, to follow the law and love God, but... there is something different in his relationship. He has a natural connection to God that most of us would have to work a lifetime to even begin to discover.

I guess it shouldn’t have surprised me when he needed to go out and be with and serve the people; when he decided to spend his adult life teaching and healing rather than following in Joseph’s footsteps.

Now, here we are three years later, and I am glad he did. Yes, I would have loved to keep him at home – what mother wouldn’t? But I hear the echo of the angel’s voice in my ears

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and I am reminded that my son had a purpose greater than himself or our family. He was destined to touch the lives of many, to make a difference in people's hearts, to help people see a new way to live.

Even so, at times I struggled to accept that he was not mine alone to love ... to care for ... to keep nearby. This I came to understand, and as I watched his impact on other people, even feel joy and pride in.

(turn toward cross, angrily) But, this ... this torture ... this suffering, I never understood that this could happen to him ... could be done to him.

AND FOR WHAT?

For loving people and offering forgiveness rather than condemnation, he is being punished.

For trying to help people understand that God's kingdom isn't about military might, but about creating relationships of peace and justice, he is being persecuted.

For refusing to fight back and instead showing people a different way to live, he is being tortured.

For offering people life in new ways, he is being killed.

And all I can do is watch. All I can do is stand at the foot of his cross and wait for him to take his last breath. All I can do is feel my arms ache for the child I can no longer protect. All I can do is love him and hope...

Hope that it's enough.

(young Mary escorts other Mary away from the cross and out)