

## Mary

Series: The Glory of Christmas

Luke 1:26-38

November 28, 2021

Good morning again and welcome to worship on this first Sunday of Advent. Advent means “coming,” and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ.

Our Advent series this year is called “The Glory of Christmas.” Now, the glory of Christmas has a variety of glorious facets to explore. The truth that the Good Shepherd not only can carry you, but also wants to carry you, is one glorious part of the greatest story ever told. Jesus, described in the pages of John’s gospel as The Good Shepherd<sup>1</sup>, is more than able to carry the weight that may be pressing on your shoulders during this Christmas season.

The word “weight” is an appropriate word when talking about the “glory” of Christmas. The Hebrew word for “glory” is the word *kuh-vode*<sup>2</sup>. *Kuh-vode* not only means “glory”, but also it means “weight.” With that in mind, the glory of Christmas has an aspect of weightiness. While this season certainly can get tangled in superficial commercialism, there is at the center of Christmas a weightiness, an importance, a deference, a respect that is filled to overflowing with honor and majesty. *Kuh-vode* ...weight...glory.

If we are not careful, an unnecessary and undesirable weight around unhealthy Christmas expectations can begin to slump our shoulders and suffocate our soul. We can find ourselves feeling pressed to get everything done from decorating to shopping to baking to figuring out how to see everybody in a way that leaves family and friends feeling satisfied (or not) with the amount of face time everybody was able to “enjoy” all while donning those ugly Christmas sweaters. There can be feelings of so much to do with not enough time (or money!) to get it all done.

And as we feel the *weight* of Christmas, we may be in danger of missing the true *glory* of it. Yes, the Good Shepherd can carry you through this season of Advent in a way that allows your life to experience needed and meaningful hope, peace, joy, and love. For you to encounter those memorable themes that add up to the true weightiness and significance of the season is part of what He has in mind for you. It just may be that changing your plans is part of *His* plan for your life.

Let’s see how God changes plans.

VIDEO: MARY

Our 31-week pregnant “Mary” in the video certainly had her plans for life altered when she and her husband found out they were pregnant. Two in college and one in the womb was not how this “Mary” had mapped out her life unfolding in this season. Perhaps she was expecting to fill her empty nest with travel, reallocating freed up money from braces to remodeling her house now that the kids were gone...with straight teeth. Whatever our “Mary’s” plans may have been, coupling college tuition with diapers and baby formula was not what she had in mind.

Perhaps the weight of considering how her previous plans were having to pivot caused her knees to buckle a bit. And yet, God reminds us in the Bible that He knows a

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<sup>1</sup> See John 10

<sup>2</sup> kavod

thing or two about the plans for our lives. God wants to remind you this Christmas that the heaviness of your circumstances can be carried along by the truth of His words concerning the plans *He* has for your life. Fear not; and like Mary did after she gave birth to Jesus that first Christmas, ponder these things in your heart anew for a moment.

Jeremiah 29:11 reads:

*For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*<sup>3</sup>

Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5-6:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*<sup>4</sup>

And the Apostle Paul declared:

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*<sup>5</sup>

I could give you others, but suffice it to say, God has a pattern of sharing His intentions for planning things in our lives that may be different than we sometimes plan things out in our minds. And it is not wrong to plan. As a wise person once said, “You have to have a plan so you can know what to deviate from.” However, may we not get crushed by the weight of our plans changing from what we had in mind. The Good Shepherd desires to carry you through the changing plans in the different seasons of your life.

Will you let Him? Will you choose to trust? Will you choose to take a breath? Will you choose to notice the glory of Christmas by looking at Jesus and His birth story with fresh eyes and a lighter heart this season?

God wants to show you His glory of Christmas. Sometimes He chooses to go to supernatural lengths to unveil the plans He has in mind. He did that for a young teenage girl 2000 years ago that was represented in the nativity play. Remember what was said to her in Luke’s gospel that would lead to the glory of Christmas and the plans God had in mind for this young girl named Mary. From Luke 1:26-38:

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be*

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<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT2)

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> Romans 8:28 (ESV)

*impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.<sup>6</sup>*

Mary’s plans changed that day the angel of the Lord encountered her with a new set of plans leading to the glory of that first Christmas in a Bethlehem stable. She could tarry and worry, or she could trust and wait on the Lord over the next nine months to fulfill His plans and carry her into motherhood. Mary chose to trust and wait. She chose to let God carry her through upcoming days of uncertainty, questions from society about her character, hardships on her husband who also would need some time to process this new change of plans.

And as the weight of all these circumstances and challenges mounted, God’s glory came into the world right on time, just as *He* had planned. The Apostle Paul says it like this in Galatians 4:4-5:

*But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.<sup>7</sup>*

Such a promise and a plan from God is weighty and glorious beyond all scales of measurement. God chose to invoke the plans of salvation by a divine conception into the womb of a young Jewish girl who had yet to ever experience motherhood. She would be entrusted to grow God’s glory in human form inside her body and give birth to full divinity clothed in full humanity. Only God could come up with such a plan that would lead to all who call on the name of Mary’s baby, Jesus, to be saved from their sins. Not only that, but the true glory and weight of it all was that such a plan would lead to those calling on the name of Jesus to be adopted as sons and daughters into the family of God.

What kind of a God could come up with family planning like that? The kind of God who would select a virgin girl to be the mom of His only begotten Son and a God who would choose to change the plans of a former soccer mom with two in college to be 31 weeks pregnant with her 3rd child...even at this season of life.

Our God knows the plans He has for all of us. As crazy as those plans may seem at times, they are plans for our welfare and not for our evil. They are plans to give us hope and a future. And that future includes a capacity to experience and enjoy the glory of Christmas.

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 1:26-38 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Galatians 4:4-5 (NLT2)