



The *One* Who
Set the World
Singing

ADVENT IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



PART THREE – MARY: SHARED THREADS IN THE DIVINE STORY

By Pastor Trish Wilbee

Luke Chapter 1

Who is Mary.

Mary's story is our story: we live in dark times, we are disrupted by Jesus, we are invited into surrender and we are filled with the Spirit to join God's great reversal. Mary is not a stained-glass picture or a statue. She's a real woman with chores, grief, fears and a complicated political context. Her 'yes' to God doesn't mean an easy life. It means honour and horror, privilege and pain.

Mary's story shows that:

- We long for peace in dark and violent times.
- Jesus' coming disrupts our lives and demands a response.
- Jesus' coming births something in us and through us.
- Together, we become the place where God dwells by His Spirit.

Luke 1:26-38: The Annunciation.

Luke 2:34-35: Simeon's prophecy of a sword piercing her soul.

Like Mary, living as a follower of Jesus can be beautiful and costly at the same time.

Shared Threads in the Divine Story

I. We Long for Peace in Dark and Violent Times

Mary grows up under Herod, Rome, brutality, unjust power and constant fear. She knows the stories of Herod's cruelty and Rome's violence. Crucifixions, massacres and injustice are normal.

Israel longs for the Messiah who brings justice and righteousness, not just personal comfort.

Jeremiah 23:5-6: A righteous Branch from David who brings justice and righteousness.

Isaiah 9:6-7: The Prince of Peace whose government and peace will never end.

Deuteronomy 28:13: 'The Head and Not the Tail' – longing for dignity and freedom

Our 'Herod' may look different (war, political turmoil, injustice, economic anxiety, family chaos), but the ache is similar. We still cry out for peace in our homes, workplaces, cities and the world.

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II. Jesus' Coming Disrupts Our Life and Requires a Response

The angel's announcement brings both hope and genuine threat in Mary's world. Every encounter with Jesus disrupts our plans and invites us to trust a better story than the one we'd write.

Mary, like us, has three options:

1. Walk away – dismiss it as crazy.
2. Mentally consent and work in our own strength – try to engineer a revolution on our own.
3. Surrender to apprenticeship – 'I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.'

Luke 1:26–38: Mary's Response of Surrender.

Isaiah 55:8–9: God's ways and thoughts higher than ours.

III. He Births Something in Us and Through Us

In a sense, Mary is the first Christian theologian – she wrestles with what it means for God to become flesh.

'The Arm of the Lord' in her song points to God's decisive action in history – ultimately seen in the cross. God's strength is revealed in surprising weakness: the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross are the 'outstretched arm' of the Lord.

The Magnificat (Mary's Song) Luke 1:46–55 also announces a great reversal:

- Proud scattered;
- Mighty brought down;
- Humble lifted;
- Hungry filled; and
- Rich sent away empty.

This isn't a call to violent revolution but to Spirit-led reversal of values and systems. As Christ is formed in us, we should increasingly:

- Care about the poor and hungry;
- Become advocates for the powerless; and
- Let Jesus' rule shape our bank accounts, time and priorities.

God is still birthing new compassion, courage and advocacy through ordinary disciples.

Exodus 6:6 – God redeeming with an outstretched arm.

Isaiah 40:11 – The Arm of the Lord

Isaiah 53 – The Suffering Servant

IV. Together We Become the Place Where He Dwells

Mary experienced God overshadowing her; we experience God indwelling us. Her womb held Christ physically; we hold Christ spiritually by the Spirit.

Pentecost is the turning point: the fire that once marked temple/tabernacle now rests on people. Fire is a symbol of God's presence and holiness throughout Scripture:

- Burning Bush (Exodus 3);
- Sinai (Exodus 19);
- Pillar of Fire (Exodus 13);
- Tabernacle and Temple Filled with Glory (Exodus 40; 2 Chronicles 7); and
- Refining Fire (Malachi 3:2–3).

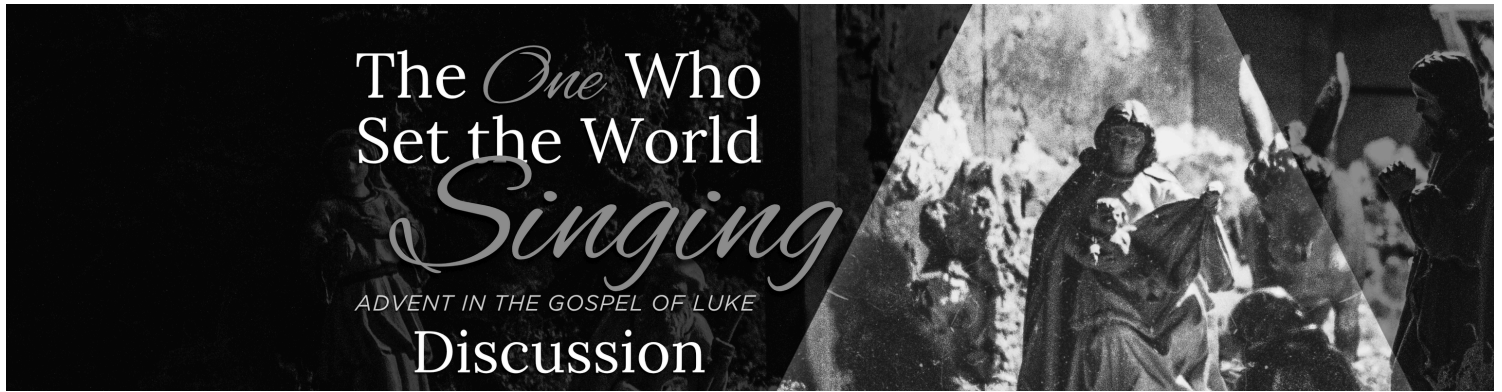
Now the Spirit dwells in believers individually and together as the church. We are the new 'Holy of Holies.'

Acts 2:1–4: Pentecost and Tongues of Fire.

1 Corinthians 3:16–17: You are God's Temple.

John 14:16–18: The Spirit With Us and In Us.

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Discussion Questions

When you think of ‘Mary, Mother of Jesus,’ what images or assumptions come to mind? How did this monologue challenge or deepen that picture for you?

Mary describes brutal rulers, violence, oppression and crucifixion. What parallels do you see between her world and ours? Where do you most feel the ache for peace right now—global, local, family or internal?

Read **Isaiah 9:6–7** and **Jeremiah 23:5–6**. What kind of peace does the Messiah bring? How is that different from just ‘having life go smoothly?’

Mary names three possible responses to God’s call: walk away, work in our own strength or surrender. Which one do you most naturally gravitate toward, and why?

Can you share a time when Jesus disrupted your plans? Looking back, how do you see His hand in that disruption? Read **Luke 1:46–55**. What line in Mary’s song stands out to you today? Why?

How does God’s way of winning victory (through the cross, weakness, self-giving love) challenge the way we normally think about power and success?

Where do you notice God growing new desires in you—for the poor, the overlooked, the hurting? Are there any ‘reversal’ places where He’s inviting you to act?

Read **Acts 2:1–4** and **1 Corinthians 3:16–17**. What difference does it make to you that you (and your community) are now the dwelling place of God’s Spirit?

If the Spirit is constantly with us, what might it look like this week to be more attentive to Him in ordinary moments?

What is one concrete step of surrender, obedience or advocacy you sense the Spirit inviting you to take this week?

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You can pray this as written, or adapt it in your own words.

Lord Jesus,
We thank You for Mary—
for her courage in dark and violent times,
for her honest fear and her simple, costly “yes.”
Thank You that her story helps us see our own.

We confess that we, too, long for peace—
peace in our world, peace in our communities,
peace in our homes and in our own hearts.
We bring to You the places that feel heavy and unsafe,
and we ask You to come as the true Prince of Peace.

Where Your coming has disrupted our plans,
forgive us for walking away or striving in our own strength.
By Your Spirit, teach us Mary’s posture:
“I am the Lord’s servant. May Your word to me be fulfilled.”
Help us to trust Your higher ways
even when we do not understand the path.

Holy Spirit,
just as You overshadowed Mary and birthed Christ in her,
would You form Christ in us.
Birth in us new desires, new courage, new compassion.
Let Your great reversal take shape in our lives—
lifting up the lowly, filling the hungry with good things,
making us advocates for the powerless and voices for the voiceless.
Thank You that we are now Your temple,
that Your presence no longer dwells in a building
but in Your people.
Make us aware of Your nearness
when we wake, when we work, when we suffer, and when we rejoice.
Fill us afresh today,
that we may carry the love, joy, and peace of Jesus wherever we go.

We offer ourselves to You,
in the name of Jesus,

Amen.

DISCUSSION