

CHRISTMAS HOPE: MARY AND CHRIST'S BIRTH

Matthew 1:15-25

Galatians 4:4-7

Ephesians 3:17b-19

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What is the most meaningful part of the Christmas story for you?
- Why do you think God allowed Jesus to be born into seemingly scandalous circumstances?

In the months before that very first Christmas, Mary, the mother of Jesus, finds herself at the center of a seeming scandal—young, pregnant, and unmarried. In the fabric of Mary's story before and after Jesus' birth, we encounter struggle, pain, and brokenness. But we also discover hope—the hope that Christmas brings to human brokenness and that sheds light on why we need a savior. Through the story of Mary, and the birth of Jesus Christ, take comfort in learning more about a God and Savior who enters into our brokenness, witness God's great love for each of us, and remember God's promise of belonging.

Listen: [Christmas Hope: Mary and Christ's birth](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Where does your understanding of righteousness come from? Is that where it should come from? What did you learn about righteousness from hosts Darrell Delaney and Scott Hoezee's discussion about Joseph's change of heart?
- In segment 2, host Darrell Delaney says, "God is actually helping us to understand that his redeeming nature comes through these complicated circumstances." Where in your life do you need to remember this truth, that God's redeeming nature comes through broken, complicated circumstances?
- Based on Jesus' prayer in [John 17:14-19](#), Christians often talk about the need to be in the world, but not of the world. Read that passage; then reflect on host Scott's observation at the end of segment 2, "Our salvation couldn't come without the people most intimately involved in it: Mary, Joseph, and then finally, Jesus himself, getting caught up in the brokenness of this world, so much so that they got accused of all kinds of false things." In what way does this idea help illustrate the meaning of that passage?
- Who are the voiceless, disregarded, and marginalized in your community? With these people in mind, reflect on these questions: Would it feel scandalous to see them in church on Sunday and consider them part of God's family? Why? What needs to change in order for you and/or your church to join God in saying as Darrell did in segment 3, "You are welcome to become part of this family. You are welcome to become part of the body"?

Related Passages

- **Philippians 2:5-8**
- **Psalm 8**
- **Psalm 113**
- **Matthew 5:1-12**

Conclusion

Read and reflect on [Psalm 113](#), remembering the Christmas truth that God enters our human brokenness through Jesus Christ. Consider how this gives you hope both personally, for yourself, and for the world we live in. In your own words, write additional verses, in the style of verses 7-9, naming the people you identified above as the voiceless, disregarded, and marginalized, and like the psalmist, declare how God can enter and redeem that brokenness. Close your time by turning the words of [Psalm 113](#) into a Christmas prayer.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/christmas-hope-mary-and-christs-birth>

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