

**“Lessons From a Junior High Girl”**  
**Luke 1:30-38; 46-55**  
**December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014, Steve Karadimas**

**[1]**

What is the picture that you get in your head when you think of Mary?

**[2]**

Some of you might get a picture of Mary like this, she looks like she's in her mid 20's and just for good measure she has an orb around her head, because, you gotta have an orb around your head if you live in bible times. Here's the thing, Mary wasn't like this either, she wasn't white, she wasn't in her mid 20's she was probably only a 15 year old girl when she gave birth to Christ, she was just a teenager. I get the privilege of getting to work with the teenagers of this church and I don't use the word privilege lightly there because I get to learn from our youth every week, I get to see their joy, their passion, their love and their commitment every week. I think sometimes we miss out on learning from our young people mostly because of our own pride, and it's sad. So the same way I would say to our young people if you haven't recently learned something from someone two generations older than you you're missing out, I would say the same thing to our seniors if you haven't recently learned something from someone two generations younger than you you're missing out. And maybe today is your chance to learn something from the teenage girl, Mary.

Mary had a prominent place in the Catholic church. But then one of the big changes that happened in the beginnings of protestantism was the change of view to Mary. In the Catholic church mary was viewed as a Saint and many Catholics prayed to mary. The reformers saw that this wasn't right and changed it but in doing so I think we maybe went too far. not too often do we hear about Mary, typically we only hear about her during Christmas time which I know it's Dec 21st so I'm not really doing anything too radical here, but I think we don't talk about her enough. I think she's very important for several reasons, one is that she's the mother of Jesus, I mean that's a really big deal, Angels of the Lord spoke to her, the Holy Spirit placed Jesus in her womb. But also because she is a woman and I don't think that we hear enough stories about Women in the bible especially such a young woman. And if you look at a lot of the patriarchs of our faith you will see that those men had some serious flaws, and big screw ups. But Mary faced some of the biggest and craziest problems and she handled all of her fears and insecurities with grace and with faith and that's a lesson that not only our young people need to learn but we all need to learn.

So I was thinking what is the best way to convey to you who Mary was and I think one of the ways that can help this is by giving you an opportunity to look into the lives of some of the young girls in our youth group

**[3]**

Callista teufel- This is Callista she's in grade 11 and she's homeschooled. She's a 16 year old girl that goes to our church. She volunteers a lot with our kids ministry and she goes to youth group every week and she absolutely loves it. Callista has a lot of really great personality traits, she has a strong faith that shows up in her life all the time, but my favourite thing about Callista is that she always has the biggest smile on her face, the joy of the Lord so obviously shows through her. This is a girl a lot like Mary.

**[4]**

Rebecca Stevens- This is Rebecca she's another one of our students who is in grade 11 and she goes to Carihi. Rebecca cares so much about people and that shows up in everything she does. I remember a while back Rebecca was in my wife's small group and one night she

decided to bring all of her friends to youth group for her birthday. She had a cake and she had like 12 kids who didn't ever really come to youth group all came and filled up her small group, they had cake and heard about Jesus, it was great. Even just this past summer she was a CIT at camp homewood and she got to serve God and serve kids at Camp. This is a girl a lot like Mary

### [5]

Daysia- This is Daysia she is in grade 9 and she goes to the Christian School. Daysia is the definition of energy, for such a little girl she is so tough and she can do so much. she loves sports and she loves to push the limits. one day at youth group, it was my first year it was 7 o'clock and none of the grade 7's were at youth group and I thought that was weird because usually there was a bunch of them. and I heard some yelling and I was looking around and I looked up and there were all the grade 7's on this giant tree, and sure enough at the very top of this huge tree out in the field there's Daysia yelling at the top of her lungs. There's nothing she won't try. She doesn't give up, she's a girl a lot like Mary

### [6]

yes these girls are all separated from Mary by about 2000 years, but they've gone through life as a teenage girl and some things don't change. Just like the girls in our youth group Mary had fears she had insecurities and she had hobbies and dreams. So I'm gonna go back in time a little bit and now focus on Mary.

So around 4 BC the whole Roman world is taking a census, I mean, can you imagine that? everybody going to their town to register it would be crazy, people travelling for weeks on end with young families, the elderly, everybody. But for me there was one special case. A young man, and his pregnant wife Mary. This couple travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. I have a map here but I know that doesn't mean a lot to very many of you. This is a 90 mile trek through the mountains and to those who are healthy and fit who didn't have a lot of baggage this was a week long journey. But this isn't one of those best case scenario's because all the while this journey is happening Mary is 8 and a half months pregnant. But if we start there all we see is that we have a young couple only been married 8.5 months the young girl is 8.5 months pregnant, and we get a very different picture from the truth. So lets go back a bit further to the beginning of this story.

It starts off like anything else, Joseph seems to be a pretty normal nice guy, he's hard working, he's been a carpenter his whole life and he loves Mary. Mary's a sweet young girl. They love each other, it's great, what could go wrong.

But that's just the start and the more we go into this story the more we start to see how God has blessed this young girl in amazing ways.

She was engaged to Joseph at the time when Gabriel the angel appeared to her, the same angel that gave Daniel a revelation, maybe even the same angel that shut the mouths of the lions to protect Daniel, that guy spoke to Mary. And when you start getting angels into a story it gets interesting.

anyways this angel said to Mary "**Do not be afraid**" which by the way is the angels equivalent of hello. Angels must be pretty scary if the first thing they have to say is do not be afraid all the time, anyways, the angel says this in Luke 1:30-38

### [7]

***“Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.”He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”***

***Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”***

[8]

***The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail.”***

***Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.***

but here’s the thing she’s having a son but she’s a virgin, God is placing his son into her womb, that’s why he’s going to be called the son of the most high.

Mary when she heard this news was probably shocked, it came from an angel so you know it’s big news, but it was also impossible. She was a virgin and she was told that she was going to have a baby, and yes she’s only 15 but she knows enough to know that that doesn’t work.

After she heard the angel she said, “how can this happen sine I’m a virgin?”

That seems like a reasonable question to me, she knows how these things work and if she’s a virgin that means something is not quite adding up. She believes God but she still has questions...that’s good.

There’s another story in the bible that is very similar to this but with a very different response from the woman.

[9]

In Genesis 18: 9-15 angels visited Abraham and this is what happened:  
***“Where is Sarah, your wife?” the visitors asked.***

***“She’s inside the tent,” Abraham replied.***

***Then one of them said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!”***

***Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. So she laughed silently to herself and said, “How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?”***

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***Then the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”***

***Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying, "I didn't laugh."***

***But the Lord said, "No, you did laugh."***

This is the woman who was the mother of many Nations, her descendants would be kings, she's the wife of Abraham the father of the faithful, and this is her response, she laughs at God. she lacks the faith that god can do it.

but the young girl, the virgin Mary doesn't laugh at God, but in her doubt but she asks the question, "*how is this possible?*"

it's a fair question, and there's a big difference there, both women had some doubt and they both had good reasons to be doubtful.

Do you ever doubt in the existence of God? sometimes I doubt God, sometimes things come up in life and from my small vantage point it might seem like God doesn't exist. If something bad happens in your life, if something tough happens it can be natural to doubt God. Both Sarah and Mary had some doubt.

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But Sarah allowed her doubt to lead to disbelief, that was her sin, when she allowed her doubt to lead to disbelief, and we can do that sometimes but that is why I want to take this time to point out the first lesson that we can learn from Mary which is that the answer to our doubt lies in pursuing Christ. Mary doubted and what she did with that doubt is she asked God a question. She was pursuing truth.

that sounds pretty simple right? if you're in school and you don't understand math you ask your teacher a question. If you're new to a job, or maybe even if you've been doing your job for a while but you don't know what to do you ask your boss. My works a little different whenever I don't know what to do I always ask Leora, If Leora could have a nickel for every time I ask her how to photocopy something her salary would probably double.

But when you doubt you ask the person who knows the answer, Sarah chose to not believe, but Mary chose to get through her doubt by asking God and pursuing the answer. Please if you have doubts, seek God to find the answer because he is the one who has it.

So Mary gets through her doubt by seeking God. Shortly after this Joseph was told by an angel of the Lord that Mary was given a child through the Holy Spirit and he took her to be his wife. But when Mary was well along in her pregnancy, when most women would like to just lye down in bed and watch TLC all day, Mary had to go on this journey to bethlehem for the Roman Census. Like I said earlier this was a week long journey in the best of times but she was doing this journey 8.5 months pregnant in the heat of summer, no Jesus wasn't born on December 25th, sorry to burst your bubble. But through this very difficult time we don't read about Mary complaining to Joseph about how her feat hurt. We don't see her yelling out at God in frustration. Instead Mary wrote a song, check out what it says.

[12]

***(luke 1:46-55)***

***"Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.***

***How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!***

***For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,  
and from now on all generations will call me blessed.  
For the Mighty One is holy,  
and he has done great things for me.  
He shows mercy from generation to generation  
to all who fear him.***

[13]

***His mighty arm has done tremendous things!  
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.  
He has brought down princes from their thrones  
and exalted the humble.  
He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away with empty hands.  
He has helped his servant Israel  
and remembered to be merciful.  
For he made this promise to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his children forever.”***

[14]

She praises the Lord in this very difficult time. And this is our second lesson that we can learn from Mary. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says to ***“Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”*** That is what I see in Mary

Yes she is blessed to have God place his son in her womb and through her God will be with us. But at the same time this is terrifying, she didn’t seem like the girl who wanted this. She wanted a simple life.

She had to tell Joseph that she was with Child, while they were still pledged to be married, he would have divorced her if it hadn’t been for an angel appearing to him, what young woman would want to have that conversation? You have to believe that everyone around her thought that she had sex outside of marriage, she had to go on a huge journey while she was pregnant. She had plenty to complain about, but she chose to be thankful instead.

Here’s the thing every one of you has stuff to complain about and every one of you has stuff to be thankful about. there’s not one of you that is an exception to this rule, we all have good stuff and bad stuff going on. you can choose to be thankful or you can choose to be a complainer. I’ve known a lot of people in my life that have chosen to be complainers, their not generally fun people to be around. But I’ve also known a lot of people that even when they’re going through very difficult times they have chosen be thankful, and that is something we can learn from Mary, she could have chosen to complain, but she chose to be thankful and praise God for the good in her life.

I can’t think of many lessons that our culture needs to learn more than this. To be thankful in all circumstances. Think about the weather, the weather pretty much stays the same every year, it rains in the winter and get’s kinda hot in the summer. It happens every year, and the vast majority of comments on the weather or negative or positive what do you think? Negative people choose to complain. That’s something that Mary didn’t do, she chose to be thankful and that is something we can learn from her.

Moving on in their journey they get to Bethlehem a fairly small town where the census is being taken, the whole line of David is going to Bethlehem to Register so obviously the inn is full, so they find this stable with a feeding trough in it, that's what a manger was, it wasn't a cute little crib with some fluffy soft grass, it was a feeding trough. But while she's there, Bethlehem is full during the time of this census, and there's no better time for a story to be told than when there's a bunch of people there to listen. The cool thing was is that the story does get told, not by who you would expect, but by a bunch of shepherds. You see the night that Jesus was born shepherds heard from an angel that the Messiah has been born, they rushed to Bethlehem to see what happened and they saw the child.

The Shepherds go and see Jesus, and immediately they go out to Bethlehem, this place is full of people from all over and the Bible says they told everyone what had happened and it says all who heard the shepherds story were astonished.

Well of course they were astonished, Jesus the Messiah was born, this was an amazing story. It still is an amazing story. and look at what Mary does with this story, really look at this because it's important it says in Luke 2: 19 **"Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often."**

#### [15]

That's the last thing I want to point out about Mary that we can learn from. Because I've focused this story on Mary but really, it's Jesus's story, the story about how Christ came to earth he was called Immanuel which means God with us. isn't that cool. That God is with us, he came here as a baby born not in a palace, not in an inn, but in a feeding trough in Bethlehem. He lived a perfect life and he has invited us into a relationship with him so that we can live forever with him if we believe in him.

And Mary kept all of that in her heart. If there's one thing you learn from this girl today please make it that. She kept the story of Christ in her heart. Think for a moment how you would live differently if you kept the story of Christ in your heart and thought about it often like Mary. When someone wrongs you, you would be quick to forgive just like Christ forgave you. When you see a brother or sister in Christ fall in sin, you wouldn't condemn them but you would love them and humbly show them to God. when someone tests your patience you would remember how patient God has been with you.

Our lives would be radically different and impactful if we kept the story of Christ in our hearts.

The more I hear about Mary the more it's starting to make sense to me why God chose her. At first glance she didn't seem strong, she didn't seem like a leader, you might not see her potential, you just saw a young girl who was afraid of the life that God placed in front of her. You see she was just like a lot of the girls in our youth group, she was young, she might seem immature at first. Maybe she was a little bit idealistic. she would do things that others wouldn't. people around her might judge her because of her youth and personality. you could easily miss out on seeing that God could use that girl to change the world.

But she took a very difficult journey while she was child bearing, that shows that she has strength and determination.

She handled speaking with angels and God drastically changing her plan with Grace, and that shows faith.

She wrote this song of praise to God worshipping him in the toughest of times, which shows that she has a heart of worship.

Even through her doubt she pursued Christ, which shows commitment.

she could have chosen to complain, but she chose to be thankful and praise God for the good in her life. that shows her thankfulness.

But most importantly she kept the story of Christ in her heart.

there's a lot that we can learn from a 15 year old girl.

Pray.