

Taking a Fresh Look @ Christmas

WEEK THREE: FAITH

LUKE 1:27-38

Key points

Think back through the message.
What stuck out?

Faith is designed to be active and engaged

- vs.29
- Faith is honest
- “Wondered” - cast in her mind or pondered
- Faith is thoughtful
- vs.34
- Faith asks questions for the purpose of understanding
- Faith involves both confidence and some level of uncertainty

Faith is Patient

- vs.27
- Virginitly
- Faith waits
- vs.29
- Luke 2:19
- Where feelings, perception and thought meet = “pondering”
- Faith is not about solutions, it is about the solution Giver

Faith is Surrender

- vs.18
- “Whereby shall I know this?” (KJV)
- vs.19-20
- Zechariah demanded certainty, but Mary requested sufficient understanding to trust
- vs.26-29
- vs.38
- “Behold, the bondslave (δούλη) of the Lord”
- Two kinds of slaves in the ancient world: Diakonos (διάκονος) / Bondslave (female - δούλη; male - δούλος)

Where are you in your faith?

- James 2:19

Christmas Faith: Treasuring

As often in Luke’s Gospel, a deft suggestion to the Old Testament is the basis of his illustration. To “keep” or “treasure” something in one’s heart is a regular refrain in the Old Testament (see, for example, Genesis 37:11; 1 Samuel 1:13; Malachi 2:2; Proverbs 31:11; Psalm 119:11; Daniel 1:8; 4:28; 7:28). Such a refrain is often found in circumstances where individuals have had some kind of revelation from God, which is wholly outside the understanding of the individual. In such circumstances, two responses are likely. One can simply be “amazed”, and move on (2:18). Conversely, in harmony with biblical wisdom, those who treasure in their hearts do not cast-off the unfathomable. For the faithful, the revelation is guarded and meditated upon, unpretentiously awaiting God’s time. Importantly, Luke used this Old Testament motif to speak into the posture of Mary.

The circumstances that surround Mary are indeed amazing and confusing (1:32-35; 2:48-50), however at no time in these accounts is Mary depicted as a woman in charge of her own circumstances. Repeatedly, she is depicted as someone who is wholly open to God’s directions, as she “treasures” the christologically unfathomable, and confidently anticipates the completeness of God’s revelation in God’s time.

Through the value of the phrase “to treasure in one’s heart”, Luke has equally located Mary first amongst all believers, and simultaneously he has revealed, through her, the focal import of God’s salvific history. This history is not ours to determine. Accordingly, she is the exemplar for disciples of all ages, as we are persuaded anew, not only to journey in faith, but to also keep and treasure.

