

THE GIFT OF CURIOSITY: WONDER

Scripture used: [Luke 1:28-34 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Our Scripture today tells the story of how the angel appears to Mary to tell her the good news that she will be pregnant with, and give birth to, Jesus. After some initial skepticism and doubt, Mary experiences a deep sense of wonder. Her example helps us debunk three common misconceptions about the faith: 1) that following Jesus is a matter of blind faith; 2) that it requires absence / negation of doubt; and 3) that it just *happens*, fully-formed from Day 1.

KEY POINTS

1. **Following Jesus is not about blind faith.** Scripture is full of people asking pointed questions, including Moses, Naomi, David, and Habakkuk. The disciples asked pointed questions. Even Jesus Himself on the cross asked a question, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” Following Jesus and living a life of faith is not a matter of perfect knowledge and every question answered, but it definitely is not about biting our tongue and not asking questions. At times we may need to move forward with unanswered questions, but God never expects us to move forward with unasked questions. He desires for us to engage with him honestly, fully, and transparently. Mary, disrupted by the new assignment, asks pointed questions. But she leaves room for wonder, which is a combination of being awe-struck and deeply curious. Mary wants to bow to the Lord and praise Him, yet she is asking questions as to the *how* of divine providence.
2. **Faith not only permits doubt, it welcomes doubt**, in the lives of others, and in our own lives. [John 20:24-25](#) tells the story of the Apostle Thomas who experienced deep doubt when he was told that Jesus had risen from the dead. Experience matters. Thomas did not have the experience of Jesus triumphant over death - he needed to experience it. He was open, not closed to new experience and revelation, and he sought answers. Importantly, the other disciples who had experienced Jesus’ resurrection stayed connected to Thomas. They didn’t write Thomas off simply because he had a different perspective and understanding, because they knew he had had a different experience. Ultimately, in order for our faith to grow, we will need to confront doubts, and our doubts and our faith may often coexist as we work through the challenges of life.
3. **Faith comes in stages.** Mary is an example of thoughtful engagement and her faith growing slowly as a process. She says: “I am available, I accept the assignment as it comes.” She later experiences wonder as she travels and meets with her relative Elizabeth. Pastor Hurmon experienced revival meetings in Louisiana during his years growing up. Participants prayed for saving and deliverance, and Pastor Hurmon asked God for a sign of tears so he would know that God was real. After many days, tears had not come, but Pastor Hurmon took a step of faith and response, and then he experienced a powerful move of the Holy Spirit and broke down in sobbing. Sometimes, God’s faithfulness and presence shows up as we move in faith. In the same way, we are called to surrender, trust, and continue to wonder always.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - What is a current area in your life of wonder, curiosity, or exploration? If nothing comes to mind, what was a season of your life when you were open to wonder and curiosity?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider Mary’s example, questions, and response to God in [Luke 1:28-34 \(NLT\)](#). Is there a time in your life (maybe right now!) when you wondered what God is doing, or how He would do it? As you consider how God might be growing your faith at this moment, what questions do you have, or what doubts are present? What steps might you be able to take now that demonstrate trust in God, even if doubt and unanswered questions are present?
- 3) **DO** - In a few weeks, New Beginnings begins our Explore God campaign. Find out more at: <https://www.nbccbayarea.com/exploreGod>. Take some time to pray to consider if God puts someone on your heart to open a dialogue about the 7 questions that are significant questions about meaning and purpose that we will cover during the series. Ask God for the courage to invite anyone that God puts on your heart to participate in Explore God with you: either attending NBCC during the series, or setting aside time to chat with you about the questions. If you are dialoguing with someone, sign up (let us know you will be facilitating a group - even if it is just you and one other person) and we will send you resources and a facilitator’s guide. Join us next Sunday at Mitchell Park in Palo Alto at 11 AM, or join us online!