

## “Christmas Focus”

By Mrs. Sojourner



Particularly in our culture here in the United States, Christmastime seems to be a time when people either run, or are pulled, in many directions at the same time. Effort is necessary to conquer the challenge of keeping the appropriate focus during this joyous and important season. Both Joseph and Mary were focused on honoring God with their lives. This focus caused them to be concerned when Mary’s miraculous pregnancy was revealed. Although concerned because of the shame she and her family would endure, Mary’s focus of obeying God kept her on the path of quiet obedience. <sup>Luke 1:38</sup>

Joseph’s trust in God despite how things looked was tested when he heard the news, but because he kept his focus on honoring God he was thereby honored to be the earthly father of the Christ-child. <sup>Matt. 1:18-24</sup>

The Wise Men also kept sustained focus on their task. Studying the star, preparing for the journey, taking the journey, and searching out

the location of Jesus once in Israel took considerable effort, time, and focus.

Notes:

[a]

King Herod was also focused, but his focus was to kill Jesus, unfortunately, but did fulfill one of the many prophecies concerning Christ’s birth. <sup>Matt. 2:1-18</sup>

Let us, during this joyful blessed holiday, make extra effort to keep our focus on the whole reason for the season: Jesus our Lord and Savior. We give gifts, because he was a gift and because the Wise Men gave him gifts. We sing carols honoring our Lord as angels did in that shepherd’s field long ago. We hold our loved ones close as Mary and Joseph did in the stable. Like Mary, remember the blessings God has given us and let us ponder these things in our hearts. <sup>Luke 2:19</sup>

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# Sojourning

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...with The Sojourner

## “You Are Mary!”

(Teaching Sketch)

Luke 2:8-20



It may seem very strange to have someone say you are Mary! Let’s look at Mary and see if this could be true.

**No Male Or Female**  
When I say you are Mary, I certainly mean no disrespect to Mary, the Mother of our Lord.

Let me explain. The Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, **male nor female**, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.” It was made so clear to me by Holy Spirit it is important to look at the function served by Mary when she bore Jesus the Christ in that stable in Bethlehem. When the angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her she would be the Mother of the Christ she immediately questioned how that could be since she was a virgin.

We, also, might ask a question since we are not perfect and have missed the mark set by God. Well, we can bring

Christ to a lost and dying world no matter if we are male or female or, for that matter, even though we are not virgins to sin, falling short, missing the mark. Why? We are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus<sup>[2]</sup> <sup>Cor. 5:21</sup> if we are the redeemed in Christ.

**Pregnant With Christ**  
Believers are actually pregnant with the Gospel of Christ just as Mary was pregnant with the baby Jesus. Every time you, as a Believer, tell or show the story of what Christ has done for you, you are birthing the “Good News” of Jesus’ accomplishment in his birth, life, death, and resurrection to save, heal, and deliver all mankind. When this is done the Believer is doing as the angels did in the field where the shepherds were watching their flocks by night. What was that? They were giving, “Glory to God in the highest,” and announcing, “On earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Notes:  
[1] Bethlehem - House of Bread  
[2] Mary - rebellion  
[3] Galilee - circle  
[4] Nazareth - separated  
[5] Joseph - increase  
[7] David - well-beloved  
[8] Jesus—savior  
[9] Zechariah — memory of God  
[a] Christ — The Anointed One

Please note: This is a teaching sketch only and not the complete teaching.

## Scripture:

Luke 2:8 – 20 (NIV)

### The Shepherds and the Angels

<sup>8</sup>And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ<sup>(The Anointed One)</sup> the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." <sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." <sup>16</sup>So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.



## Advent

This is the fourth week in Advent. This is the week (re-light 1st three candles) we light the:

## Shepherd's Candle

### Saying:

"I light the Shepherd's Candle which reminds us God sent an angel and host of angels to tell the shepherds of the Savior's birth, instructing the shepherds to go worship him."

### Scripture Reading:

Luke 2:8-16

### Song:

"Angels We Have Heard On High"

## "You Are Mary!" (Teaching Sketch)

Luke 2:8-20

### Seeking God's Move

When the angels left them the shepherds purposed in their hearts to go and see what God was doing. They said, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." They had truly gotten the message because we are told, "So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger."

### Spread The Word

The shepherds then, once encountering the Christ Child, spread the word about what they had both experienced and seen.

### Labor

Sometimes labor is difficult when bearing a child. This is sometimes true for believers in spreading the Gospel, but when it is spread you will find the angels' response to Mary will be true for you as well. Gabriel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." You, my believing friend, have the same assurance because the Holy Spirit is in you to carry out God's will. You the believer are truly blessed!

### Just so you'll know:

**Our service is informal.** We look to the Holy Spirit of God to guide us corporately and individually.

Our service usually follows this general pattern:

- **Informal sharing** of what we have seen the Lord do in, through, and around us since we last met.
  - Testimonies are often a part of the conversation.
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Praise & Worship**
- **Words of Prophecy or Knowledge** if they have been given during "Praise & Worship" (other times as the Spirit moves).
- **The Pastoral Message**
- **Prayer Requests**
  - Ministry to those present & intercession.
- **The Blessing**

