

Come, Journey with Me

Luke Ch 1 v 46 - 56

This month Mary the mother of Jesus says "Come Journey with Me". What a journey that will be and what a privilege to share in the life of, who the Bible refers to as, the most respected woman of all time. We join her journey as, at the age of 13 or 14, she began to make her wedding plans. Her father had arranged for her to marry Joseph a young carpenter and during their year long engagement they prepared for their wedding as any young couple would today. The preparations were slightly different, however, to those of today in that Mary would probably spend her time sewing – clothes, towels, cloths of all kinds to use in the home and Joseph would make furniture or even the house itself. They would start to build their relationship and fall in love. It was during this time that Angel Gabriel visited Mary and announced that she was to have God's son. Mary didn't know what to make of it. She was puzzled, worried and afraid. Wouldn't you be? Here she was, an ordinary young girl, as yet unmarried being confronted with such news. Unlike today, it would bring shame on her whole family to say nothing of poor Joseph. But accept it she did possibly because of the reassuring words that Gabriel also delivered. "Do not be afraid for I your God will be with you." Mary didn't say "I am not good enough" or "Give me a sign" she simply believed that God had chosen her and would stick with her in the days ahead. We are all familiar with the rest of the story –the time shared between Elizabeth and Mary before the birth of their two sons – the journey with Joseph to Bethlehem – the birth of Jesus in the stable with the animals – the visits of the angels, shepherds and later the Wise Men. Mary must have been mesmerized by all these events. They must have felt like a dream. But did she remain humble, obedient and acceptant of all around her? Yes of course. Soon after Jesus' birth in Bethlehem the family become what amounts to refugees. They fled from Herod. Once more there is fear for the future. Was what faced them better than what lay behind - so many parallels with the plight of refugees today? The little family stuck together and we read that Jesus was brought up in a loving home in Nazareth. It seems to me that through out the scriptures Mary was the only human being that loved and was with Jesus throughout his earthly life. She loved him from birth, as he grew up and marvelled at his wisdom when as parents Mary and Joseph presented him at the temple at the age of twelve. She was there when he performed his first miracle at the wedding at Cana. She was still there at the foot of the cross and again on Easter morning in the garden. I would like to think that Joseph was around not far away and they were a strong family but I don't know. Mary was no beauty queen, brain of Britain or wealthy woman but God chose her. She was humble and obedient. Can we follow her example? We can take much from Mary's life journey.

For Discussion

1. Mary seems to be central to the Christmas story. Do you feel the mother is still central to our family celebrations today, keeping the family strong and together?
2. Fleeing your home country for a better life. Christmas will heighten emotions for refugees. Can we help in any way?
3. The suggested reading from Luke is Mary's song but she could happily have sung the words of this modern song that is attached. You may like to sing them in your meetings as we face a new year.

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