

I WISH YOU A “MARY” CHRISTMAS

Robert Morris

Focus God desires for His Son’s life to be conceived and grow in each of us, and to be delivered through us to the world.

Open Have you ever been in a Christmas production of some kind, such as in the choir, nativity scene, musical or play? What role did you play?

Read Mary, the mother of Jesus, conceived, carried and delivered a miracle from God. Mary’s story in Luke 1:26–38 is literal and really happened, but it also has symbolic application. God wants each of us to conceive, carry and deliver the miracle of the life of Jesus to the world.

For a miracle to be conceived within us, we must *choose* to receive God’s word in faith. Mary’s response to the Lord’s messenger was initially fear, but then she believed the word in faith (Luke 1:38). When we *choose* to serve God and receive His word, then a miracle can be conceived and grow within us.

Between conception and completion is when we must, like Mary, carry the miracle. Mary must have endured criticism and hostility from others because of the miracle within and her unbelievable story. She surrounded herself with people who were also living by faith and magnified the Lord. Likewise, we must live conscious of the life that is growing within us and ignore what others say.

The miracle’s completion didn’t happen as Mary thought it would. She had to travel in her ninth month of pregnancy and gave birth to Jesus in a feeding trough in a cave. Philippians 1:6 promises that God will complete what He has started within us, but it probably won’t happen in the way that we think.

Mary’s purity qualified her to carry and deliver the miracle of Jesus. Because we have been washed, sanctified and justified by Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:11), we’re also purified and qualified to carry and deliver His life to the world.

Talk

1. The story of Mary is a reminder that God knows exactly where you are. He hasn't forgotten you. Have you ever wrestled with the feeling that God has forgotten or overlooked you? Why? How do you feel when you are assured that He has not?
2. All miracles are conceived by an encounter with the Holy Spirit, which may be as simple as the word of God "resonating" in your heart by the Spirit. Describe a time when you believe God spoke to you. Why did you believe it was God speaking?
3. Read Luke 1:34–38. What stands out to you about Mary's encounter with the angel? What do you think Mary was thinking as she heard the angel's message? How do you tend to respond to what seems impossible?
4. Pregnant women live differently than they do when they're not pregnant. When someone is carrying a miracle in their heart that has been conceived by the Holy Spirit, how do you think they live differently?
5. When the miracle was brought to completion, it didn't go as Mary had planned. It required her to have faith, right up to the very end. How do you tend to respond to God when things don't happen the way you had expected? What can you learn from the story of Jesus' birth?

Live

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–11. As believers, we've been purified by Jesus. Because of His grace, you're qualified to carry and deliver Jesus to the world. Does this change your understanding of God's purpose for your life at all? What do you think God wants to do in and through your life today?

Pray

Thank God for sending His Son to earth through a virgin to save, purify and justify us. Thank Him that He is still in the miracle-working business. Invite Him to conceive a miracle in your heart today, and choose to receive it by faith.