

## The Magnificent Mother of Messiah Sip Heitzig

Hello, and welcome to this teaching from Skip Heitzig of Calvary Albuquerque. We pray that God uses this message to strengthen your faith. If he does, we'd love to hear about it. Email us at [mystory@calvaryabq.org](mailto:mystory@calvaryabq.org). And if you'd like to support this ministry financially, you can give online securely at [calvaryabq.org/give](http://calvaryabq.org/give).

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is central to the Christmas story. Unfortunately, people are greatly divided about her importance and her role. In the message, the Magnificent Mother of Messiah, Skip considers five notable attributes that formed Mary's personality. Now we invite you to turn in your Bible to Luke Chapter 1 as Skip begins.

Would you please turn in your Bible to Luke Chapter 1 this morning. The gospel of Luke, third book in your New Testament, Chapter 1. I was supposed to have been a girl. I know that's an odd statement to begin a sermon with, and it needs explanation. But I wanted to get your attention.

I was supposed to have been a girl. I'm the fourth boy born to Lou and Agnes Heitzig. They had four boys. They were hoping that one of them would be a girl. That didn't work out with the first three, so I was their last hope at having a daughter. What a disappointment I was when I came out a boy.

And yet, there is often a very special bond between a son and a mother, and I will admit to you freely that though I love both mom and dad and respect to them greatly, I was very, very close to my mother. Moms love you no matter what. Their love is fierce, and it is unbreakable. In fact, we even have a saying. You have a face that only a mother could love. Mothers love no matter what.

My message today is about Mary, the mother of Jesus, the mother of the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the world. I can only imagine there must have been an incredibly strong bond of love between Jesus and his mother Mary, and one of the reasons is that we believe Joseph, Jesus' stepfather, died at a young age, leaving Mary alone. And did you know Mary was the only human person who was there at both of the birth of Jesus and the death of Jesus?

A wonderful event, a horrible event. When he came into the world, she was rejoicing. When he died on the cross, like the prophecy, a sword pierced her own heart. But if you know much about Mary, you also know that Mary is a very controversial figure. Mary is someone that Catholics will fawn over and Protestants will wince about. I've watched it for years. I grew up in my early years in a Roman Catholic family in a religious environment that exalted

Mary, and prayed to Mary, and elevated Mary.

I remember Mary being described as the co-redemptrix of the human race, as well as the co-mediatrix of the human race-- big fancy words that simply mean Mary helped redeem the world and is a mediator between mankind and God. There is even a basilica in Rome called the Santa Maria Maggiore that has a picture of Mary hanging on the cross with Jesus, as if she helped redeem the world. Inside that church is a painting that depicts Jesus himself crowning Mary as the queen of heaven.

According to the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, Mary was always a virgin, even after she had Jesus, the perpetual virginity of Jesus Christ, even though the scripture attests otherwise. Also those two religious denominations believe in the Immaculate Conception, that Mary was untainted by original sin, and thus she is elevated to the place where Mary answers prayers and Mary dispenses grace. Now all of those are not true at all, from a biblical perspective. You can say they are, but you cannot find any evidence in the Bible that those are true.

However, the other extreme committed by Protestants is to disregard Mary altogether, to ignore her altogether, to ignore the fact that she was uniquely favored by God and is blessed among women. Now, many Protestants will avoid her. I don't want to do that. I think she was a magnificent woman, and I want to show you in the scripture that.

I love Christmas, and I love Christmas messages. I love the Christmas story. I love preaching on it, but I have to be honest with you. I hesitate every year when I do any Christmas message, and you know why? Because you know it. Because it's so familiar. You know about shepherds, and Herod, and the star, and the magic. You know all this, manger. You know it all.

And that's a good thing, but some of you even know the real story. Some of you know that there weren't three kings from the Orient. Some of you know that it wasn't a Silent Night in Bethlehem. You've gotten the historical background. You know some of the more advanced real historical facts of the story that is told in the Bible but often misrepresented by Christmas carols.

So I know you know it, but to come to grips with the thought that a virgin girl was impregnated by the Holy Spirit so that that baby bump on Mary was the creator of the universe is mind boggling. I still don't get my mind around that. I've heard people say, preacher, I don't believe in the virgin birth. A virgin birth is impossible. I agree with you. It is impossible, but with God, nothing shall be impossible. And really that is the solution.

I've always thought and believed that if you can get past the first verse of the Bible, the rest will be easy. If you can believe in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, everything else is a cake walk compared to that. If he can pull that off, he can pull anything else off. So I do believe in a virgin birth.

But these thoughts must have dawned on Mary from the very beginning. She didn't quite grasp it all, but from the first announcement made-- these thoughts of what she was doing, and who she was carrying in the womb, and what this would mean-- began to dawn on her, and we have her response in Luke Chapter 1. So going through this chapter, some select verses, I want to show you five attributes of Mary, five character traits that hopefully will get us ready for Christmas. And here's the first.

Mary was real. It's weird that I'd have to say that, but I do have to say that. She was a real person. She actually existed. She was historical.

I'll explain in a moment. Let's look at the text, Chapter 1, Verse 26. "Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the House of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And having come in, the angels said to her, rejoice highly favored one. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was. And the angel said to her, do not be afraid, Mary. For you have found favor with God.

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth the son and call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the highest, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. And then Mary said to the angel, how can this be since I do not know a man?" In other words, I'm a virgin.

"And the angel answered and said to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the highest will overshadow you. Therefore also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth, your relative has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God, nothing will be impossible."

Mary was real, and I make this statement because by some Mary has been called a myth, an allegory, a fictitious made up person. She'd never existed in

history. And the reason somebody will say that is because they say, well, the only record we have that Mary existed is the Bible. We have no historical records. We have no other historical records beside the Bible that she ever existed. I just have to answer that by saying I'm not surprised at all by that, for several reasons.

Number one, she lived in Nazareth. Nazareth was podunk central. It was some little out of the way hayseed village that nobody cared about, nobody knew about. You wouldn't even have heard about it unless Jesus was from there, raised there.

And people like that from places like that were never recorded in ancient history. Furthermore, she was a Jew, a society that had been subjugated by the Roman government, and Romans had no interest in recording the lives of conquered peoples.

Number three, she was from Israel, a patriarchal society where men had top billing. Women had no legal rights. A woman was owned by her father and then later by her husband. Women weren't recorded in genealogical records typically unless she was a woman of wealth, or status, royalty. So I'm not surprised that Mary is not recorded anywhere else except in the historical record of the scripture.

So who was Mary? Having established that we believe she was a real person, who was she exactly? Well, because she had a miraculous birth, the Jewish nation historically has had to come to terms with that, and so they have made all sorts of stories up about her. The Jewish Talmud says that Mary was a hairdresser.

How? Where do they come up with that? I don't know. I can honestly say that came out of left field. She was a hairdresser. Did she do nails, too? They say she was a hairdresser who had an affair with a Roman soldier. That's how Jesus was born. The Roman soldier's name was Pantera, and the union of Mary and Pantera, the Roman soldier, brought forth this illicit child, this illegitimate child called Jesus.

I even read a pastor online whose Christmas text that he chose from was the Beatles song "Let It Be". You're familiar with the song? When I find myself in times of trouble, mother Mary comes to me speaking words of wisdom. Let it be.

So he chose that as his text, and his opening statement was, I had no idea all these years singing that song that that was about Mary in the Bible. And I thought not only are you biblically illiterate, you're musically illiterate, because Paul McCartney wrote that song about his mother whose name was

Mary who died. And in a dream he saw her one night and wrote a song that became a hit the next day.

I love the song, but it's not about Jesus' mother Mary. It's about Paul McCartney's mother Mary.

Mary was real. She was from a Jewish family. Her Jewish name would have been Miriam, a common name. And because we believe the genealogical record in Luke Chapter 3 is Mary's genealogy whereas Matthew's genealogy is that of Joseph, then we would surmise that Mary's dad's name was Heli, H-E-L-I, or Eli. So her name would be Miriam bat Eli, her Hebrew name.

Now, how old was Mary when she had Jesus? Well, some of you know, again, the answer to that. But scientific records estimate that women in Mary's day achieved menarche-- that is menstrual maturity-- around age 13 or 14. That's according to the National Geographic Atlas called the Biblical World.

So Mary was somewhere between age 12 and 14. Let's just say safely 13. We would not be unsafe to say Mary was 13 years of age when she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

Jewish women, once they reached physical maturity in those days, got married and had a family. So we have somebody very young from a poor family, a young teenager from Nazareth, a working class village who's engaged to a young man named Yosef.

And what did Joseph do for a living? He was a what? You can say it out loud. A carpenter. That's the English translation, and unfortunately, you think of a guy who builds wood houses or something or makes tables and chairs.

The Greek word is he was a tecton, and a tecton meant he was a craftsman. That is a worker with hard materials, and in those days, you know what they built with? Stone. He was a stone cutter, a stone worker.

He may have worked with wood as well, but primarily stone and some wood. He was a working class craftsman. She was engaged to Joseph.

She, Mary, was from the tribe of Judah. She was a direct descendant of King David, the royal line, which meant in her lineage there were the great kings like David, Solomon, King Asa, Josiah, Jehoshaphat, great and godly leaders of the past. But here's what's interesting. For 400 years, there has been no word of God. There has been no prophetic Revelation to Israel. There's been no angels, no miracles, silence for 400 years, till now.

And what happens 400 years later when God decides he's going to speak

again? The angel Gabriel is sent to Jerusalem first, six months before this, to a priest working in the temple named Zacharias. And Gabriel says, hey, heads up. Your wife-- I know you guys are old, but you're going to have a baby. You're to call his name John. He's going to be the forerunner of the Messiah.

Six months later, Gabriel shows up in Nazareth and appears to Mary in the scene we have just read. Now, Gabriel is interesting, because Gabriel isn't just an angel. He's like the angel's angel. He's a super angel. There's only two angels in the Bible, named Michael and Gabriel.

Gabriel is the guy who gives to Daniel prophetic messages about the future in Daniel Chapter 8, Daniel Chapter 9, the great 70 week prophecy. Gabriel gives that.

Gabriel is in charge of all things messianic for the Jewish nation. He shows up and gives this to Mary, and Mary's response is I'm confused. I don't get it. How can this be? I'm a virgin. And the answer is simply, it's God. Nothing shall be impossible with God.

The Lord will overshadow you. This will be born. He will be born of the Holy Spirit conceived by God. So this young confused teenager gets up and goes to visit her older cousin Elizabeth in Jerusalem. It's a long journey.

Why? Why does she go visit her? I think I can guess. Who else would understand what just happened? There's only one person on earth who would understand, and that is Elizabeth.

Why? Well, who else would understand when a 14-year-old girl says I'm pregnant by God? A woman who's had her own unusual pregnancy announced by the same angel Gabriel. Who's going to believe a girl when she says she's the mom of the Messiah? A woman who has been told she's going to be the mother of the forerunner of the Messiah. So she goes to visit Elizabeth. Mary was real.

Second character trait I want you to see is that Mary was humble. Verse 38, look at her response. Mary said, Behold, the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word and the angel departed from her." That's a statement of absolute submission that shows her humble faith.

Did you know that every Jewish girl-- from the time that Messiah was announced, Jewish girls grew up in ancient times hoping that maybe they might become the mother of Messiah? Messiah is coming. Messiah's going to be the son of some mother.

Maybe I'm the one. Maybe my baby boy is going to change the nation of Israel and reside over as king forever. Maybe I'm going to be the one.

Now, having said that, when Mary discovered that she was the one, her response is interesting. Because if God dispenses an angel from heaven to say to a young woman, you are very unique, you are the one God has chosen of all people on Earth to have ever lived to birth the Messiah, that could tend to make a person puffed up with pride, walk away from that and say, I must be special.

And indeed, Mary was special. Mary was unusually spiritual, very, very unique, but she was also humble. For she says, behold the-- look at the word-- maid servant of the Lord. Literally, behold the slave maid of the Lord.

The word is double in Greek. Some of you who know the language know that sounds familiar. It's the feminine version of the typical word for servant or slave, doulas. When it's put in the feminine form it means as a woman having no rights in this patriarchal society, but also a slave maid. I am completely owned by a master. I have no rights of my own, and I gladly take that place.

In ancient times, there were both servants and slaves, and there was a difference. A servant wasn't owned, but contracted out. A servant was compensated for work produced. A servant could come and go as he or she pleased. A slave on the other hand, was the property of a master, had no rights at all, ever, was under complete ownership, could not come and go as he or she saw fit.

So Mary didn't see herself as just a servant, but as the slave maid of God. Notice in Verse 48-- I just want to skip down to Verse 48, her prayer. We'll get to it in a minute. She says, "for he, God, is regarded-- look at this-- the low or the lowly state of his-- here's the word again-- maidservant, slave maid."

In other words, look, I know who I am. I'm a poor, young teenager from Nazareth. I know what God has done. He has not gone to Rome, the political center of the world. He has not gone to Athens, the cultural center of the world. He has not gone to Jerusalem, the spiritual center of the world.

He came to a no where place, to a nobody, and has done this-- the lowest state of his maid servant. But she says, future generations are going to hear how God blessed me.

Look also at Verse 52 to see her humility. "He has put down the mighty from their throne and exalted the lowly." She would include herself in that. This is humility.

Every year I hear people talk about the Christmas spirit. Let's get into the Christmas spirit. Question, what is that? IS that where you walk by lights and get a fuzzy feeling. Oh, it's the Christmas spirit. Or the song, I get into the Christmas spirit.

I submit to you, this is the Christmas spirit. The Christmas spirit is not, man, I didn't get everything I wanted for Christmas. The Christmas spirit is wow, God stepped out of heaven and brought Christmas to me. I don't deserve anything.

So she was real, and she was humble. Look at a third character trait of Mary. She was worshipful. Now I want you to consider, beginning in verse 46, her prayer. She goes to Elizabeth's house, and they have a conversation. And listen to what Mary says. Here's her song.

Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit has rejoiced in God, my Savior. For he is regarded the lowly state of his maid servant for behold henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For he was mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy has spoken to our fathers to Abraham and to his seed forever."

What did I just read? A teenager just said that? A 14-year-old at best, girl, 13-year-old spoke that? This is the praise that comes out of her heart at this time. And it's worth considering.

There's that question, when you bump up against something, what spills out? Answer, whatever's inside. This is what's inside this girl. When she is bumped up against when an angel gives her the most shocking news of her life, this is what bubbles forth.

This is her song of praise. It's called the Magnificat. It's a Latin term for the third word in her prayer-- "My soul magnifies the Lord"-- a song of praise.

And it tells us a lot about Mary. We're peering into Mary's spirituality here. Do you know that one of the best ways to get to know a person is to pray with a person?



I often tell a young couple-- if they're dating, I say, do you spend much time praying together? And then they sort of look at me like, well, you're a pastor you're supposed to ask questions like that. But I mean it.

I remember dating my wife Lenya. And I remember one night in particular after a dinner we had-- I hadn't seen her for a while-- I took her home, and we prayed together. And my impression on that night-- I'll never forget it-- I thought, man, I want a relationship with God like that.

She is connected with God on a level that I yearn for. And it's been said that prayer is a window to the soul. You're peering through the window into Mary's soul. Her heart is pretty mature for a 13-year-old. Wouldn't you say?

Last night, I gave this message, and a proud grandfather came up to me-- I've known him for years-- with his granddaughter, Addison, nine years of age. He said, we came a little late. She couldn't go into the Sunday school, so she sat with me in big church and showed me her notebook. I said, notebook?

A nine-year-old carries a notebook? And it's filled with sermon notes, several pages, and it said Skip's class. And she had taken notes through several pages. And I'm looking at the notes going, you're how old? That's what I think about when I read this prayer of Mary.

So she was real. She was humble. She was worshipful-- three character traits. Let me give you a fourth.

She was scriptural. Now, get this. I hope this will impress you about Mary. I have discovered no less than 15 references in this teenager's prayer to Old Testament scriptures, 15.

Most scholars read this prayer, and they go, hmm, that sounds familiar. It sounds very similar to Hannah's prayer, First Samuel Chapter 1 and 2, where Hannah, you remember, was barren, and the Lord said she's going to have a boy. And his name was Samuel.

So there is a corollary, and probably I wouldn't doubt that after Mary was told that she's pregnant by the Holy Spirit she went and found the scroll in the synagogue that had First Samuel in it and wanted to read that story to bone up on what happened back then.

But Mary must have memorized scripture. She must have, because there are references in this prayer to the Old Testament law, first five books of Moses, prophets, and the psalms, all in her prayer.

Let me give you an example, a few examples. Verse 46, she says, "My soul magnifies the Lord." That's an echo of Psalm 34, Verse 2. "My soul shall make its boast in the Lord or magnify the Lord." Verse 47, "My spirit has rejoiced in God, my Savior." Sounds very much like Isaiah 45:21. "The is no God besides me. A just God and a Savior, there is none besides me."

Look at Verse 48. Mary says, "For he has regarded the lowly state of his hand maiden or his maid servant." That's very much like what Hannah prayed in First Samuel 1:11. "You will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant and remember me."

Verse 48, "For behold henceforth all generations will call me blessed," sounds like Genesis 30 when Leah, the wife of Jacob, prayed, "Happy am I for the daughters will call me blessed." Amazing.

Verse 49, Mary says, "For he who is mighty has done great things for me." That's an echo of Psalm 126, Verse 3, "The Lord has done great things for us." And then finally, Verse 49, "And holy is his name," a direct quote of Psalm 111, Verse 9.

Here's the thought I walk away from. Mary must have paid close attention in the synagogue when the scriptures were read. Don't you think? For her as a 13 maybe 14-year-old to have this kind of a prayer, she must have paid close attention. Now again, here is a teenage girl who knew the Old Testament, and she didn't have a concordance she could pull out and look it up. This just flowed from her.

On occasion, I meet a very spiritual teenager. Whenever I do, I'm so impressed, and I pause, and I gravitate toward that one, whether it's a girl or a guy, when they have that heart for God at a young age. And I want to channel that. I want to get behind that. I want to encourage that.

Because I remember when I was 17, 18, and I'd just come to Christ. And I had all this zeal and energy, and I had a mentor who saw that and saw that's a good thing. But it has to be directed. It has to be challenged.

1 Timothy, Paul writes to young Timothy and said this. I love it. "Let no one despise your youth." Another translation, let no one look down on you because you are young.

Did you know Jesus lead a youth movement? If you're picturing the apostles as gray headed, gray bearded old guys sitting around a table, you got the wrong impression. They were young. It was a youth movement that Jesus spread around the world.

So here's a teenager, Mary, without a library, without a computer, without internet Bible programs, and this comes out. Not only does she know her Bible, this girl knows theology. As I read her prayer, she knows about the Abrahamic covenant. She knows about the Davidic covenant. Man, she knows stuff pastors I know don't know.

And let me just give a footnote to this, because I just want to press this just a bit. Then I'll leave it. You will never regret as you grow older spending too much time with scripture.

I've never met a person on their deathbed to think, I wish I wouldn't have memorized so much Bible. Because it's at times like your death bed or like a bed of suffering and pain that those scriptures come back to comfort you, that you have placed in your heart, that you remember. And they carry you through, and Mary knew that as a young girl.

So when people bump into you, what comes out of you? Same answer, whatever's inside. From the abundance of the heart, Jesus said the mouth speaks, and this is what she spoke. She was real. She was humble. She was worshipful, and she was scriptural. Let's close on this. She was also needful. She was needful.

Verse 46, Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord." Verse 47, "And my spirit has rejoiced in God-- say it out loud, my what-- my Savior." My what? Savior. Thank you.

Who needs a Savior ? Yeah, I know. I appreciate that. Let me rephrase that.

Technically, I know you do. We all do but, who needs a savior? A sinner needs a savior. Savior is only good to somebody who needs saving. That's what a savior is.

A savior comes and does what a person cannot do, saves the person, delivers the person. So for Mary to say God is my Savior-- not just quoting the scripture, but he is my Savior-- denotes that she has a need. She recognizes that she has a need for salvation.

Now, I'm pressing that, because nothing is stated here or anywhere else in the Bible that Mary was immaculate, that Mary was to be prayed to, that Mary dispenses grace. Somebody might say, now wait a minute. Verse 48 says, "He has regarded the lowest state of his maidservant. Behold henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

That's right. Look at what it says. It didn't say all generations will ask me to give them a blessing. They're going to regard me as the one who's the recipient of the blessing.

They're going to call me blessed. This is what God has done for me. Verse 49 says, "He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

Listen, the greatest thing God ever did for Mary was to save her, and she knew that she needed saving, that she along with everyone else was a sinner in need of salvation. She admitted that.

Hey, do you remember the time when somebody came up to Jesus? This is the first time Mary worship started to get in vogue. It was during Jesus' own time.

A man came up to Jesus in Luke Chapter 11. Listen to his words. He said, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." Now, that sounds very similar to what I remember growing up with.

"Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." And Jesus immediately spouted back, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

He didn't say, oh, you're right. Blessed is my mother. None of the apostles, none of the writings of the New Testament venerate Mary in any capacity. But they would agree with what Jesus said. "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

Did you know that Mary would be the first one to be appalled if she saw or knew that people were praying to her, venerating her? Now, I do believe Mary should be honored. I do believe that what Elizabeth said of her in Verse 42, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." I believe that.

She is to be honored. Best way to honor Mary is to worship the God she worshipped. Best way to honor Mary is to receive the Savior that she birth into the world. That's the best way to honor her.

You remember that song "Mary Would You Know?" or "Mary Did You Know?" by Mark Lowry? And some people think it's an ancient hymn. It's pretty recent actually, but a lot of people love that song.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water? Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters? But my favorite verse is, did you know this child that you delivered would soon deliver you?

Yes, she knew that. She may not have known it at all at that moment. She's sort of figuring this thing out. But by the end of Jesus' life, she will know it. She'll discover it over time as she raises Jesus.

Can you imagine raising a perfect child? See, you can imagine that, can you? I can't. I've never seen one.

Can you imagine how frustrating it would be to be a brother or sister of Jesus? I know. He's perfect.

Mary would watch, and Mary would discover. And she would hide these things in her heart, and she would stand at the foot of the cross. And she will know one day that the baby she delivered would deliver her, and she includes you, by the way.

She includes you in her song, Verse 50. "And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation." That includes you. This is your generation. This is one of those generations she sung about in the lyrics of her song. That's us. His mercy is still around to save.

Father, thank you for this young girl-- very, very unique, very honored, very blessed among all women. Not to be worshiped, but to be honored. Not to be prayed to, but certainly learned from and learned about, seen as an example. And what a humbling example she is.

We thank you for her, Lord. We thank you for her spirituality, her scriptural emphasis. We thank you for her humility, her simplicity. And we thank you for the Savior that she bore. The issue is never Mary. It's always the Messiah, the Savior of the world, the incomparable Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood alone saves a man or a woman from sin.

Hey, as your eyes are bowed, you're praying, maybe you're just realizing you don't have a relationship with the Savior, you're not walking with Jesus, you're not living obediently to Jesus. You know him or you know about him religiously, culturally from your family, but you've never met him personally. He's not the center of your life. You've never received him as the one who cleanses you from sin. I want to give you an opportunity to do that.

Real quickly in closing, our heads are bowed. Our eyes are closed. Mine are going to be open. I'm going to ask you, if you don't know Jesus yet, I want you to raise your hand up and say I want to receive him right now, right here.

I'm willing to just pray a simple prayer and ask Jesus to come into my heart. Just keep your hand up for a moment. God bless you right up here in the

front.

Anyone else? Just raise that hand up. Just say, yep, I need to do this. I know I do. Pray for me. Here's my hand.

God bless you to my left-- a couple of you.

Anyone else? Yes, ma'am. Right up here in the front.

Toward the back, way in the back, thank you for raising it high.

Father, we just want to pray for those who have raised these hands and pray that you just bring change to them, hope to them, peace to their hearts as Jesus becomes the very center of their lives. So wherever you are right now, if you raised your hand up, I want you to pray with me.

I want you to say these words from your heart to the Lord. You can say them out loud if you wish. You can say them silently if you wish.

Say Lord, I give you my life. I know that I'm a sinner, and I'm asking you to forgive me. I believe that Jesus died on a cross, that he shed his blood for my sin, and that he rose from the grave, and that he's alive right now.

I turn from my past. I turn from my sin. I turn to Jesus as my Savior. I want to live for him as my Lord. Help me to do that. In Jesus' name, amen.

Though she was human just like everyone else, Mary exhibited attributes that led her to be chosen to birth our savior. What did you learn from her example? Let us know. Email [mystory@calvaryabq.org](mailto:mystory@calvaryabq.org). And just a reminder, you can give financially to this work at [calvaryabq.org/give](http://calvaryabq.org/give).