



## Part 3 Discussion Guide

### Face the Issue:

Merry Christmas!

In part three of our Christmas series “The Rest of the Story”, Jeremy shared with us that the Christmas story, as we know it, sometimes comes across as unfair. Mary and Joseph couldn’t catch a break. Every time things seem to be settling down, a new circumstance pops up to shake up their world.

This is especially true for Mary. This teenaged girl had her whole life ahead of her when a series of life (and world) changing events began. How is this fair for this young girl to have happen to her?

*What is the image you have in your mind when you think of Mary, the mother of Jesus?*

*What have you heard, in past sermons and Bible studies, about Mary? List the words that come to mind when you think of Mary.*

### Into the Word:

#### Read Luke 1:26–38

This is the familiar story of the angel’s announcement to Mary that she would bear a son named Jesus. Luke depicts Mary as a rather ordinary young woman of first-century Judea. She does not appear to be especially holy or even humble. Very few details are given about her nature or background. Instead, Luke presents her as someone whom God has chosen to participate in a special mission.

This story resembles other biblical stories in which someone is called by God and assigned a job to do. Mary has been referred to as “the first disciple.” She is the first, in the story of Jesus, to say yes.

*How does the story of Mary’s call relate to your own experiences of being called as a disciple of Jesus?*

*Why do you think Mary’s initial response to the angel Gabriel was fear?*

*In what ways is the call of Mary a model for the rest of us and our calling to be disciples of Christ?*

#### Read Luke 2:21–35.

Eight days after the birth of Jesus, after the trials of His birth that may have seemed so unfair, Mary got more news in the song sung by Simeon. This song is sort of a preview of the rest of Luke’s gospel.

*What does Simeon’s song tell you about Mary?*

*What does Simeon’s song tell you about Jesus?*

*Note verse 35. What does Simeon mean when he says, to Mary, “a sword will pierce your own soul too”? When did Mary suffer a “sword” through her soul?*

## **Apply The Word**

Mary's story does not end at Christ's birth. Her discipleship continued.

### **Read John 19:25–27.**

Even as we begin the story of Jesus with Mary, so she is there at the end of the story.

*How does Mary's story as a disciple relate to your story as a disciple? Have things always seemed fair? What can you learn from her experiences of discipleship and service?*

*If you had to preach a Christmas sermon on Mary, what would you tell the congregation?*