



Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

Jonah • Mothers of the Faith • Luke 1:26-38 • 05/13/2018

Main Point

All women have the chance to be mothers of the faith.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who have been the most influential women in your life? How have they shaped who you are?

Who are a few women in the Bible that God used in a significant way? Which woman's story resonates with yours the most?

In the first century, one of the things that separated the Christian faith from other prevalent religions is the dignity and worth Christianity assigned to women. The Scriptures declare that all people, men and women, are made in the image of God and, as such, have equality and worth. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus (1:1-17) included four women, which would have been highly unusual at the time. From the very beginning of God's redemptive work we see women play a vital role. Today we will look at mothers of the faith and see what they teach us about disciple making.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read Luke 1:26-38.

Describe Mary's initial reaction to the angel Gabriel (v. 29). What does the angel tell Mary about her relationship with God?

To be an effective discipler of others, what must first be true of your own relationship with God?

What was God asking of Mary, and what stands out to you about her response?

Mary's humility towards God put her in a position to receive God's best for her life. Why does God value a humble and obedient heart? What impact might this have had on Jesus to observe growing up?

In the angel's opening statement to Mary, he referred to her as "favored" (v. 28), and in verse 30, he added that it was God with whom she had found favor. God's favor was evidence of His grace in Mary's life. Knowing God's purpose and submitting to that purpose are two different matters. Mary was at that crossroads of decision where she had to submit or reject. Her response was forthright—she referred to herself as God's servant, or slave. Mary expressed complete submission to God as His will for her life. Mary's faith was a ready faith that not only accepted God's will, but agreed wholeheartedly with what God was about to accomplish.

| Have a volunteer read Luke 7:36–8:3.

What can we learn about discipleship and devotion from the example of these women?

How was the "sinful woman" minimized by Simon? What was he missing about what was necessary to be a disciple?

Jesus' parable helped Simon understand that love grows out of forgiveness. The more a person understands and appreciates his or her debt, the more that person will appreciate forgiveness. The natural response is to love the one who forgives, just as our love for Jesus grows out of having received forgiveness from Him. Jesus showed love in guiding Simon to see both the woman and her extravagant care. Jesus did not stop with emphasizing the rightness of the woman's action. He also prompted Simon to contrast his own lack of gratitude. The second set of women in Luke 8 gave freely of their finances to support the work of the kingdom. Both sets of women gave to Jesus of their devotion, resources, and lives.

| Have a volunteer read John 11:17-44.

Do you think Martha's first words to Jesus conveyed disappointment, criticism, or recognition of fact? How did Martha misunderstand Jesus' response?

Why do you think Jesus asked Martha to believe in Him before He gave her a miraculous physical reason to believe?

What does Jesus' reaction to Mary reveal about the heart of God?

The family in this story had become very near and dear to Jesus, and these sisters were some of Jesus' most committed followers. Even though we know that eventually God is going to make all things right, it often doesn't help us in the moment of pain. In the moment of pain, good and right theological statements can often feel like trite cliches. Jesus knows better than any of us just how broken the world is. When He is

confronted with the suffering of the world, He isn't passive; He's angry. In fact, Jesus feels the pain of a broken world more deeply than we do. He shared the sorrow and grief with these women and comforted them in the midst of tragedy

| Have a volunteer read Luke 23:26-28,48-49,55, and 24:1-10.

When you read about these women who were around for the events of the crucifixion and resurrection, what stands out to you as you contrast them with the Twelve Disciples?

Why must we make sure to not minimize the task and role of women in the faith?

When the rubber met the road, all of Jesus' disciples fled. They were nowhere to be found while the women clung to Him. They were present in His darkest moments when Jesus' most trusted men ran away. Women have a vital role in the faith and the women we have studied today are portraits of what it means to be devoted to Jesus in a profound and life changing way.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Who are the special women in your life? How can you express appreciation and gratitude for them this week?

What are a few ways we can support women in our midst as a group?

Read Titus 2:3-5. What are the unique gifts God has given women to teach and train others in the faith? How might you live out (or support) a woman in this calling?

Pray

Thank God for the women in your life who act as spiritual mothers to others. Ask that He would bless, empower, and encourage them to be the women He has called them to be. Thank Him for the gift of women and mothers and ask Him to help them see their task as a calling from God.

Commentary

| Luke 1:26-38

1:26-27. The announcement of Jesus' birth carried the authority of God. It came in the sixth month, a reference to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist. The term virgin emphasized the purity associated with a young, unmarried woman. Although engaged to a man named Joseph, Mary did not yet live with Joseph. In first-century Jewish culture, engagement (or betrothal) bound them together legally as husband and wife. The wedding and consummation of the marriage, however, followed at a later time. Luke

identified Mary's husband, Joseph, as a member of the house of David. The Jews knew from the Scriptures that the future Messiah would be a descendant of the great King David. This fact supported the identification of Jesus as King. The Child to be born, then, would be identified with the lineage through which the Messiah had been promised (see Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-5).

1:28-30. Mary was favored because the Lord set His undeserved grace upon her, not because she had earned good standing. Understandably, she was deeply troubled (Gk *diatarasso*; "confused, perplexed") by Gabriel's visit and greeting, wondering how she had come to receive such an honor. Gabriel's admonishment that Mary not be afraid was the same thing he said to Zechariah (v. 13).

1:31-33. Mary's conception would be miraculous because she was still a virgin (v. 34). The name Jesus is equivalent to the Hebrew *Yeshua* (Joshua), meaning, "the Lord is salvation." In Genesis 14:18, God is referred to as "God Most High." Humanly speaking, Jesus' lineage would be traced legitimately through the royal family of David because Joseph, Jesus' adoptive father, was a descendant of David. This made Jesus heir to David's throne according to God's eternal covenant (see 2 Sam. 7:13,16).

1:34-35. The difference between Mary's response (how can this be) and Zechariah's (v. 18) is that Mary asked her question not from unbelief but from puzzlement (v. 38). The answer to Mary's question about how she could get pregnant without being intimate with a man is that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and cause her to conceive. Because the Holy Spirit was the agent of conception, the child (the Holy One; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15) would be the Son of God.

1:36-38. If ever Mary was tempted to doubt God's promise to her, she could recall Gabriel's words that nothing will be impossible with God, as had been shown in the lives of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 18:14). Mary's response is a classic model of humble commitment (I am the Lord's slave) and willing obedience (may it be done to me according to your word).

| LUKE 7:36-8:3

7:36. While Pharisees often criticized Jesus for eating with sinners, one member of this sect invited Jesus to a meal at his home. Jesus did not refuse the man, although He surely knew the nature of Simon's attitude toward Him. Willing to offer His love even to those who rejected Him, Jesus entered and reclined at the table.

7:37. An unnamed woman who lived in this town came to the banquet. Luke described her as a sinner. Although the nature of her sin is not identified, the term "sinner" and Simon's reaction to her probably indicate she had a notorious reputation. Thus she was known to people at the dinner. Several social conventions were broken in the woman's encounter with Jesus. The woman brought a gift, not for the host

but for his guest. An alabaster flask was often used for perfume. Mark 14:5 indicates the value of the fragrant oil at more than 300 denarii, nearly a year's wages for the average person then. Such would not have been used for ordinary purposes.

7:38-39. Luke did not address why the woman was weeping. The context suggests love and gratitude motivated her tears. Her tears also may have reflected remorse over and repentance for sin. Not daring to address Jesus, the woman wiped His feet, cleaning away the dust and the tears with her hair. Her humility and her love for Jesus led her to perform an unthinkable act of servanthood.

7:40. Contrasted with the woman's humility and thankfulness, the Pharisee's response revealed the haughty and critical nature of his heart. The language used here conveys that the Pharisee did not speak aloud. Although the Pharisee did not speak directly to Jesus, Jesus replied to him.

7:41-43. Jesus answered the Pharisee's objection to the woman's act with a parable. The more a person understands and appreciates his or her debt, the more that person will appreciate forgiveness. The natural response is to love the one who forgives, just as our love for Jesus grows out of having received forgiveness from Him.

7:44-46. The contrast of Simon's indifference and the woman's gratitude stand in stark contrast. The woman's act showed she had more than respect for Jesus. She had great love for the Lord and expressed it in an extravagant manner.

7:47-48. The first sentence in verse 47 does not indicate the woman was forgiven because of her act of love, but rather that her love showed she had been forgiven. Because her many sins had been forgiven, she responded with much love. As Jesus noted, the person who is forgiven little, loves little. Addressing the woman, Jesus startled everyone at the table by declaring her sins were forgiven.

7:50. Jesus did not defend Himself, nor did He accuse the guests of hypocrisy. Instead He again spoke to the woman, giving reassurance that her faith had saved her. The Pharisees believed salvation was the result of doing enough good works to earn God's approval. By following the law and thus doing good, Pharisees expected the blessings of God on earth and a place with God in eternity.

| John 11:17-44

One of the most moving scenes in the life of Jesus is the death of Lazarus. Here we see not only the power of Jesus to raise the dead, but the emotions of Jesus moved by the grief of those around Him. Martha's faith is evident as she approached Jesus, four days after the death of Lazarus, and professed belief that He could save her dead brother. When Mary came as well and Jesus saw her grief and the grief of those with her, he was "deeply moved in spirit and troubled." Scripture then tells us that Jesus wept.

What could testify more to the divine nature of Jesus than to exhibit the power needed to raise someone from the dead? Wishing to teach an important truth about how God hears and answers the prayer of belief, Jesus prayed aloud. Note that the raising of Lazarus serves as something of a foreshadowing of the power to resurrect all believers one day to fellowship and eternal life in Christ. Unlike Lazarus, who was raised only to die again, Christians will be raised to eternal life.