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Sermon Idea: If you can have a soloist or group sing “Mary Did You Know” prior to this message it will have a greater impact.

MARY DID YOU KNOW?

In 1995 a new book came out with the title of “If.” The book is designed to help stimulate discussion among people at a party, on a long trip, or any place else where the conversation needs some help. The book prompts you to answer questions that all begin with the word *if* . . . thus its simple title.

The questions range from the ridiculous to the sublime. Here are some samples:

- *If you could physically transport yourself to any place in the world at this moment, where would you go?*
- *If you could eat one food in any quantity for the rest of your life with no ill effects whatsoever, what food would you choose?*
- *If your home was to be totally destroyed by fire but you could save just one thing, what would it be?*
- *If you could be one article of clothing, what would you be, and who would you want to belong to?*
- *If you had to inhabit the body of someone you know personally while keeping your own mind, whose body would you take?*
- And here's an interesting one:
- *If you could have personally witnessed one event in history, what would you want to have seen?*

That last question stuck out to me in particular – If I could personally witness one event in history, what would it be? Since we’re in the midst of the Christmas season I automatically thought of being there at the birth of Christ. Being able to converse with Joseph, and Mary would be an experience I’d certainly never forget. And I think I’d like to ask Mary some questions, questions like those that were asked in the song sung just a few minutes ago – I’d want to know what Mary really knew about this baby, Jesus, that she had given birth to.

In fact, I want to ask some of those questions here this morning, both of Mary and of each of you. It only seems natural that as we approach Christmas we’d want to know more about the one we are gathering together to celebrate.

DID YOU KNOW THAT JESUS...

1. ...WAS THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE?

It is hard to imagine Mary, looking into the face of her beautiful, newborn baby boy and considering that she held the creator of the universe in her arms. And I think it's difficult for us to comprehend also.

That the God of creation would come to earth in the form of a fragile human infant is far beyond what any of us would expect or even dream of. But the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus was the main agent in creation.

He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make. – John 1:3

As Mary looked around her at the green grass on the ground, and as she felt the spray of water on her face from the ocean, and as she gazed at the stars glistening in the night sky, she held in her hands the one responsible for it all.

Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through him and for him. He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together. – Colossians 1:16-17

Did you know that about Jesus? Did you know that the one we whose birth we celebrate this Christmas season said “Let there be light” and there was light? Did you know that Jesus designed the universe, created countless solar systems, set time into motion, started the planets spinning, put natural law into place, and is responsible for sustaining all of the activity in the universe even today?

That is what the Bible tells us about Jesus, the helpless infant resting in the arms of His mother Mary – and it is something we must keep in mind as we worship Him.

2. ...WAS THE PROMISED MESSIAH?

In the Gospel of Matthew, as we read through the long genealogy of Jesus' ancestors, we come to this conclusion:

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Mary was the mother of Jesus, who is called the Messiah. – Matthew 1:16

After a long history of waiting for this one promised to them, the Jewish people finally had their Messiah, but He wasn't quite what they expected.

In March, 2001, a little Jewish girl was killed in the tit-for-tat fighting in Hebron on the West Bank while she sat in her stroller. On a wall near where she died, there is a poem in her memory. According to the *Chicago Tribune*: It is an elegy to her pinchable cheeks, her sweet smile, her kerchiefed cuteness—and to the urgent need of revenge. "We will take revenge, we will scream for revenge in body and spirit and await the coming of the Messiah," the poem says.

That is how people thought of the Messiah in Jesus' day, too. That's why they were so unprepared for a Messiah who preached repentance and faith, who paid scant attention to the Romans, and who said He would win freedom by dying for sins.

They were expecting a military ruler, a deliver, one who would take from them the oppression of Rome, and put their own nation in charge. I assume that Mary had the same expectations as did her countryman. And while the angel confirmed that the baby in her womb was the promised Messiah, I wonder if she really knew what kind of Messiah He would be?

What about you? What if I were to ask you today about what it means to say Jesus is the Messiah? How would you answer?

Everything that the Old Testament said about the coming Messiah was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, but it was not fulfilled in the way most people expected. Jesus came to deliver His people, not from an oppressive government, but from the sin that dominated their lives. Jesus came to conquer, not by military force, but by transforming minds and hearts. Jesus came as a revolutionary leader, who not only stood against the world's value system, but even against much of the religious teaching of His day.

And what Jesus the Messiah wants to do this Christmas is to deliver each of us from sin, and transform our minds and hearts, and to make us whole again. The Messiah of 2,000 years ago is still in that role today, waiting for us to respond to His offer of wholeness.

3. ...WOULD BATTLE SATAN AND WIN?

I recently heard the story of a woman who was released from the hospital after extensive rounds of therapy failed to turn back the progress of a deadly disease.

Confined to her bed at home, the woman received regular visits from her physician, but she couldn't work up the courage to explain her illness to her six-year-old daughter. One morning, however, the little girl overheard the doctor speaking gravely with her mother and father. "I'll be frank with you, Susan," the physician said. "You don't have much time. I don't think you'll survive the autumn." A short while later, the mother glanced out the bedroom window and saw something that nearly broke her heart. She watched as her daughter stooped to pick up the leaves that had begun to fall in the September breeze; and then, as if to foil the force of gravity itself, the little girl worked to scotch-tape each leaf back on a branch.

I wonder sometimes if Mary wished she could do something like that. As she raised the infant Jesus and saw Him grow, and began to understand more and more of His plight here on earth, she must have wanted to turn back the clock. To know that this child of hers would be faced with everything that evil had to offer up against Him had to send fear into her heart.

When Mary and Joseph took the infant Jesus to the Temple, they were met by the prophet Simeon who prophesied to Mary: *"The deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."* – Luke 2:35

Simeon was speaking of the Cross – the most horrible, and yet the most wonderful event in all of history.

Leading up to that day, Mary would see her Son mistreated, rejected by their own people, tried by the religious leaders and then the Roman government. And then she would see Him nailed to a Cross – as hard as it would be for us to watch, it is hard to imagine what it would be like for Mary, His own mother.

But I have no doubt that if Mary were here speaking to us today, she would say the pain and suffering was worth it all, because through His death on the Cross, Jesus defeated Satan's control over this world and over all of us who will come to the Cross and accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. – Hebrews 2:14

He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ. – Colossians 2:14-15

The good news for us this Christmas is that we don't have to battle Satan, because Jesus has already won the battle for us. That infant born 2,000 years ago was destined for the Cross, and on that Cross He died for your sins and mine, so that we could be forgiven and be with Him forever.

This Christmas the best thing that you could do, if you haven't done it already, is to place your trust in Jesus and let Him lead you into the life you've always wanted.

4. ...WOULD REIGN FOREVER AS KING?

We need to keep in mind that Mary was a young lady who hadn't known a life of luxury – she was a poor girl from a poor town. The man she was to marry, Joseph, was a carpenter, who certainly didn't have much to speak of when it comes to worldly possessions. And while they were both descended from the royal line, Mary could have never dreamed that she would become the mother of a King. Yet, when the wise men came to Jerusalem, they asked this question.

"Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have seen his star as it arose, and we have come to worship him." – Matthew 2:2

What a paradox that the baby born in a manger should be called a "King." Yet even as an infant, Jesus Christ revealed power. His birth affected the heavens as that star appeared. The star affected the wise men, and they left their homes and made that long journey to Jerusalem. Their announcement shook King Herod and his court. Jesus' birth brought angels from heaven and simple shepherds from their flocks on the hillside. Midnight became midday as the glory of the Lord appeared to men. The King of the Jews born in a cow stall, the King of the Jews rejected by His own people, the King of the Jews nailed to a Cross.

Unlike any other King prior to His birth or since, most would not recognize Jesus' position as King until later in His ministry, and for some, not until His death and resurrection from the dead.

A signboard was fastened to the cross above Jesus' head, announcing the charge against him. It read: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." – Matthew 27:37

While this sign might have been placed in mockery, we know that in the end everyone will recognize Jesus as King.

On his robe and thigh was written this title: King of kings and Lord of lords. – Revelation 19:16

The infant that Mary bore was not just the King of the Jews, but the King over all Kings. My hope and prayer is that you've made Him the King of your life.

5. ...WOULD LOVE YOU UNCONDITIONALLY?

I have no doubt that Mary loved Jesus with every fiber of her being, just as any good mother would. But did she have any hint of the intensity, sincerity, and unconditional nature of the love that Jesus would have for her, as well as for the world? And do we have any concept of how much Jesus loves us, without condition?

So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. – John 1:14

The word for “unfailing love” here can also be translated grace, and what it means is that Jesus loves you in spite of your sin, in spite of your faults, in spite of you turning your back on Him over and over again.

And it also means that Jesus loves you enough that He not only died in Your place, but that He offers you the opportunity to be the recipient of His love and companionship for all eternity if you'll just place your faith in Him.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it." – John 3:16-17

No matter what you've done, no matter where you've been, Jesus is willing to shower His unconditional love on you right now, and give you the gift of eternal life.

CONCLUSION:

In a few days many of you will sit around a Christmas tree opening presents and spending time with loved ones, and that's a great thing. But I really hope that we'll all take the time to consider who Jesus is, what He has done, and how we can serve Him in a greater capacity than ever before. We've asked "Mary, did you know?" Now that we know, we must act.

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