DAY 18

LUKE 2:19–20

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

In the Christmas song, "Mary, Did You Know?," the singer asks what Mary knew about her baby boy. Did you know He will … walk on water? save our sons and daughters? make you new? deliver you?

The angel Gabriel had already told Mary some incredible things about her Son—that she should name him Jesus (which means, "Yahweh is salvation"), that He will be great, will be called the Son of the Most High, and will reign on David's throne forever.

But there are a lot of things that Mary was not told. She does not seem to have been told that by accepting God's task for her, she would be labeled an adulteress. Or that shortly after her Son's birth, Herod would try to kill Him, her family would flee to Egypt, and every baby under age two in Bethlehem would be slaughtered instead. And she does not seem to have been told that the process by which her Son would save us all required His rejection, torment and death—all while she stood watching.

If we put ourselves in Mary's shoes, we can see that she would endure the dark night of the soul time and time again during Jesus' life and death. These are times when it feels like hope seems to be lost, when God's plan is not clear, and when God Himself may seem distant or unresponsive. The narrative in Luke 2 shows us how Mary remained faithful through these dark nights—how she could stand at the foot of the cross while her baby boy died as heaven's perfect Lamb, and yet still choose to be in the room, praying with Jesus' other disciples at the start of the book of Acts.

She pondered on what she had seen God do. To "ponder" means to weigh or reflect on repeatedly. As we are in the season of Advent, reflect on your own experiences with God. Where have you unmistakably seen God's goodness? Even if He feels far away now, take some time to remember those moments when you have known, deep in your soul, that He is good. If none come to mind, listen to "Mary, Did You Know?," and reflect on His faithfulness to Mary.

REFLECT

Read John 16:33 and remember that no matter how dark the night feels, Jesus, the Light of the World, is still in control. Write down a memory of a time when God carried you through a hard season or answered a prayer that seemed impossible.

PRAY

Father, please bring to mind times when I have known your goodness personally. Even though the night is dark, I will trust that you are faithful and will never leave me. Help me to trust you, even when I feel like my circumstances are out of control. Thank you, King Jesus, for becoming that baby who did save the world. Amen.