



Faces around the Cross

Study Guide

April 5, 2009

YIELDED: MARY

²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," ²⁷and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. John 19:25-27

INTRODUCTION

As we approach this Easter Season and consider the "Faces around the Cross," one face we find is Mary, the mother of Jesus. As we follow her from her betrothal to Joseph to her standing at the cross, she exemplifies a person of surrender throughout her lifelong walk with God. Mary's faithfulness didn't stop with Jesus' birth. Mary continued to serve the Lord with admirable obedience through all His ministry's seasons and transformations. Mary gives us a glimpse of the secret of having Christ formed in us – surrender. If we want to experience Jesus like Mary did, we must be prepared to embrace the cross.

Some Thoughts

1. Whose agenda are you following - your own or God's?
2. Whose will are you doing - your own or God's?
3. Whose kingdom are you building up - your own or God's?
4. What about Mary – whose was she following?

Looking at Mary's life:

When you think of Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:26-56), Simeon's Prayer (Luke 2:41-51) and John 19:25-27, Mary's life was one of preparation for the Cross.

1. In James 1:12, what significance does this passage have for Christ being formed in you?
2. Read Luke 2:28-35. What warning did Simeon give Mary about what was to take place because of Jesus?

APPLICATION

1. In Matthew 16:24-25, what is Jesus telling us about being His disciple?

Read Philippians 3:10-14 and Colossians 3:1-4.

2. In these passages, what does Paul encourage believers to focus their hearts upon?

FURTHER STUDY

Read Genesis 22:1-19. Abraham was tested by God to surrender his son, Isaac. Similarly, Mary too is asked by God to surrender her son. Mary typifies the surrendered life.

1. As you look at these historical events, what "Isaac" is God asking you to surrender?
2. What would have been the result had Mary not surrendered to God's plan?
3. What does surrendering require in the believer's life?

Please turn over →

4. What is the significance of Jesus' words in John 19:27? *"He said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son, and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Why is surrender so difficult?*
5. How have you learned surrender?
6. What is the relationship between surrender and obedience?
7. How does our willingness to surrender reflect our trust level?

Read together John 12:23-26.

1. What in your life needs to die in order for it to be multiplied in God's timing?
2. Is there a cost to surrender? What is it?
3. What happens when we refuse to surrender our relationships to God?

We are all faced with a decision like Mary. Will we surrender to God and allow God, from our point of view, to do what seems impossible? Will we surrender our agenda, our will and our kingdom to God and allow God's agenda, will and kingdom to become a reality? When Mary surrendered, Jesus came.

To help us surrender like Mary, Charles de Foucauld has written a famous Prayer of Surrender.

Father,
I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only your will be done in me
and in all your creatures.
I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul:
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.