

Luke 1:26-45  
Series – Do Not Be Afraid  
Message – Do Not Be Afraid to Hold Hope  
December 3, 2023  
Fifth Reformed Church  
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### **Good Doubt, Bad Doubt**

- “Why does Luke tell us so much about how Mary responded to the incarnation? I believe it is largely to hold her up as a model of what responsive Christian faith looks like” (Tim Keller, Hidden Christmas, p. 81).
- Mary is a \_\_\_\_\_ of how we might respond to Jesus.
- “Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be” (Luke 1:29).
  - “was greatly troubled” = to disturb \_\_\_\_\_
  - “wondered” = to reckon \_\_\_\_\_

“There is a kind of doubt that is the sign of a closed mind, and there is a kind of doubt that is the sign of an open mind. Some doubt seeks answers, and some doubt is a defense against the possibility of answers. There are people like Mary who are open to the truth and are willing to relinquish sovereignty over their lives if they can be shown that the truth is other than what they thought. And there are those like Zechariah who use doubts as a way of staying in control of their lives and keeping their minds closed. Which kind of doubt do you have? (Tim Keller, Hidden Christmas, p.83).

- It was a \_\_\_\_\_ of evidence and experience that led her to faith.

### **Stages of Faith**

- There no single way to come to faith in Jesus.
- Stages Mary experienced (from Keller, Hidden Christmas):
  - Stage 1 – Measured Incredulity

- How can this be? This is crazy!
- Stage 2 – Simple Acceptance
  - “I am the Lord’s servant.”
  - Translated: “I still don’t understand, but okay...”
- Stage 3 – Trusting Reliance
  - “Blessed is she who has believed...”
  - “All I want is you.”
- Do not be afraid to hold hope.

### **How will you respond to God’s word today?**

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### **Reflection Questions**

1. Read through Keller’s description of different kinds of doubt. Have you experienced “good” doubt that spurs you on toward seeking answers? Share that experience.
2. Have you experienced “bad” doubt and used mental objections to remain in control of your life and avoid real answers?
3. How did evidence and experience play roles in your journey to faith?
4. Can you relate to the stages of faith? Have you experienced any of those? Are you experiencing any of them now?
5. What captured your attention in the scripture or message?
6. What might God be saying to you?
7. What are you going to do about it?