

Mary Comforts Eve

I heard someone say that the Christmas season is kind of like the 9th month of pregnancy. There's a lot of busyness, weariness, excitement and nervousness in preparation and anticipation for something to get here. And when we think of the first Christmas story, that perspective was never more legitimate than for Mary herself. But the Christmas story doesn't actually begin with Mary. Because we believe at the heart of the Christmas story is the story of all of us. The story of humankind and its relationship with the God who made us. And in the midst of the beauty, wonder, and excitement, we're also well aware of agony, pain and adversity, kind of like the pregnancy process. With that in mind, we want to try something a bit different by using a piece of artwork to guide our hearts and thoughts. For some, this will be just what the doctor ordered, while for others, it will be a chance to stretch your spiritual muscles. We want to share this picture, entitled, "Mary Comforts Eve."

Take a moment to gaze on this image and consider how it strikes you. Pause for a moment. Whether or not you have much of an immediate reaction, I believe there's something relatable and even moving within this image for all of us this morning. Over the next few minutes, spend some deliberate time with it, I think God might just have something for all of us. With that said, I want to invite you into the process and into a prayer help open our hearts for how God wants to speak to us.



READ | The Story of Eve | From Genesis 1-3

REFLECTION | Eve

In part, this picture contains the story of us. A story that knows pain and brokenness. A story that knows cursing and struggle. A story that knows wandering and heartache. A story that knows guilt and shame. And in this image, this part of our story is most depicted by Eve. So, take a moment and consider how we see ourselves in her. Look at her posture. Notice the way her eyes peer to the ground. Gaze on her sadness; the way she seems to need to hide her entire being. See the serpent, wrapped around her feet, making it hard to even move. Put yourself in her place. Maybe it's a place you know all too well. Maybe it's a place you've tried hard to forget. What is she feeling? What is she longing for? How does it make you feel? What does it make you long for? What have you been trying to cover up? What do you need to get off your chest? What do you feel entangled by? Where are you longing for help and hope? Take a moment to gaze on Eve. Take a moment to reflect on her story. Take a moment to pray. Take a moment to confess the ways you relate to Eve.

READ | The Story of Mary | From Luke 1

REFLECTION | Mary

Not only does this picture contain the story of us, in the struggle of our humanness, but it also paints the picture of our hope in God's holiness. In his miraculous. In his forgiveness. In his mercifulness. And in the possibility of the renewal of all things. Let's take a moment to put ourselves in the place of Mary. Notice her resolve and confidence. See the care and concern in her eyes. See how she reaches out to comfort, and also draws in to guide toward what matters most. What must it feel like to hold such good news? What must it feel like to imagine such possibility? How can we imagine such possibility in our own lives? What must it feel like to nurture the presence of Jesus inside of her? How might we be able to nurture the presence of Jesus inside of us? How might everything be changed knowing we have a Saviour, not just for us, but for every Eve we'll ever know, and that includes us? Take a moment to gaze on Mary. Take a moment to reflect on the hope of her story. Take a moment to ask God for this hope deep inside of your life.

REFLECTION | Jesus

And then Jesus came. The God of the universe patiently enduring 9 long months to become one of us in the exact same way that any of us have ever become one of us. Born into the time and space of the world he created as a helpless, vulnerable, low- percentage shot of survival, little baby. Not just to be born. Not just to inspire a cute little story. But to live. To breathe. To learn. To walk. To grow. To talk. To teach. To heal. And ultimately to die. To surrender to the greatest act of love ever known by offering the life of God on a cross to renew and re-found the entire world. This is the picture of Christmas. This is the picture of the divine colliding with the human. And the result is freedom. The result is forgiveness. The result is the crushing of the darkness. The result is a new garden; a new atmosphere to be lived in. The result is the bearing of new fruit that renews our lives forever. The flesh and blood, sweat and tears, fingers and toes, ears and nose of our God, the Saviour of the world, born at Christmas in the person of Jesus. And that leads us to the bread and wine – or in our case, juice – of communion, the reminder and encounter of his presence in this real world. Tangible, nourishing, nurturing and renewing, just like food and drink that sustains us. So that's the invitation as we sing this final song; to see in this picture and taste in this simple "meal," the coming of Jesus to bring a new way, a new power, a new freedom, a new forgiveness as far as the curse is found.