



# MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

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## Sheep

*When he has brought out all his own,  
he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him  
because they know his voice.*

(John 10:4)

*“... I have come that they may have life, and have  
it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good  
shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”*

(John 10:10–11, NIV)

*He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather  
the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom  
and gently lead the mother sheep.*

(Isaiah 40:11)

## Mary, Mother of Jesus

### *Sheep*

**M**y son continually amazes me. It is a gift to watch Jesus as he transforms this woman, Mary of Magdala, from spiritual death to eternal life. How I wish my Joseph were still alive and could see what Jesus is doing! How proud he would have been! I know this incredible plan of salvation comes from my son's heavenly Father, but Jesus' earthly father fulfilled his role with love and faithfulness.

The lines in the face of Magdalene release and become smooth, and I can no longer resist the urge to hug my new sister. I put my arms around her and sense her body stiffen, then ease. "When Jesus sets you free," I whisper, "you are free forever, Magdalene." Her bruised face glows with the truth of my words, and her eyes widen as a child's.

"Tell us what it was like," Salome demands. She takes sandals from Susanna's outstretched hand, then kneels to put them on the feet of Magdalene. The gesture is lovely, though I am less sure of Salome's inquiry.

"Magdalene may not yet be ready to share her life with us," I say.

"I cannot take so fine a sandal on so filthy a foot," Magdalene protests.

Salome ignores the refusal while Susanna whisks a sky-colored tunic from her travel bag and places it around Magdalene's shoulders. I know Susanna has great wealth, but her quiet generosity overflows. And yet, something within her keeps her distant.

I nod to our friend and benefactor. "Susanna, too, has come to believe. Jehovah-Jireh, the Great Provider, sent her to us at just the right time."

Salome sits back on her heels. "So? What happened?"

Magdalene's eyes close, and I almost tell Salome to stop asking questions. But when Magdalene opens her eyes, they are filled with wonder and joy. "I heard Jesus."

Susanna's head tilts, freeing a strand of hair from her long, shiny black braid. "I, too, was healed by Jesus."

Jesus joins us, and Magdalene turns to him. "I heard you. For years, I have heard the voices shaming me, urging me to sin, screaming inside my head. They blocked every other sound and left me empty. But I heard you. The only voice I heard was yours."

Jesus gives her the smile I have lived for each day of his life, a piece of joy, filled with light and delight. "Of course you heard me! I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me. My sheep hear my voice and follow me."

Magdalene glances at her new sandals. "Follow you?" Her countenance shines as she declares, "Yes! I will follow you."

## PONDERING . . .

1.) In John 10, Jesus calls himself the Shepherd and calls us his sheep. Ponder the ways this applies to your relationship with Christ. How can we know we're following the right voice?

2.) How do you hear Jesus' voice? Can you recall specific moments or events when you believe you heard his voice? How did you know the words, or thoughts, came from God?

3.) What other voices vie for your attention? What thoughts take up too much space in your head? What can you do to discern Jesus' voice above all the other voices?

4.) In Psalm 95:7, David says: *For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!* Close your eyes and sit in silence for a few minutes, asking God to help you listen to what he's saying to you today.

*Dear God,  
Please help me hear the voice of my Shepherd.*