May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

There’s something about Mary. The Archangel Gabriel, God’s own messenger, declares her to be the “*favored one*” (Lk 1:28). God is with her. Her cousin, Elizabeth, says Mary *is blessed among women* (Lk 1:42). Even Mary knows this about herself saying, “*All generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me*” (Lk 1:48).

I wonder, though, whether Mary felt favored and blessed. Did Mary feel favored walking through town with her unwed pregnant belly the subject of stares and judgment? And what about when Joseph planned to quietly leave her and avoid the scandal? Where is the blessing in giving birth on the ground amongst the animals of the manger? There surely was no sense of favoring as she and Joseph took Jesus and fled for their lives to Egypt. Watching her son, the one to whom she gave life and her own flesh, be arrested, beaten, and killed does not sound much like favoring or blessing.

God’s favor and blessing do not necessarily mean life is easy, we get our way, or we live happily ever after. It is not God’s reward for right behavior or right believing. It is rather a state, a condition, a way of being. Mary understands that her favoring and blessing by God are not dependent upon or determined by the circumstances of life. So, often we look at what is going on around us, the circumstances of our lives, and then declare ourselves or another to be blessed or not. Mary, however, teaches us to look and live more deeply; to look beyond the circumstance of life and see God within us.

It means trusting that God sees more for and about us than we often see for ourselves. That’s what Mary did even as she asked, “How can this be?” She trusted God more than her life’s situation. She felt the movement of God within her, the kick of new life, and the growth of something holy. The favoring and blessing of God wasn’t around her. It was within her. It is who she is. It is also who we are. We too are favored and blessed but we must look deeper than the changing circumstances of our lives. Even when we do not see it or understand it God is deep within us, working secretly, creating new life where we thought there could be none. “*For nothing will be impossible with God*” (Lk. 1:37). Nothing. Like Mary we must go to that deep place where we ponder and treasure.

Pondering and treasuring ask us to wait, to be quiet and listen, to be still and receptive, to be open and vulnerable to God’s life in our own. It is God’s invitation for us to participate in God’s favoring and blessing of our lives.

Yes, there’s something about Mary. There’s also something about us. Amen.