

Luke 2:1-20

## Mary Treasured These Things

Christmas Eve December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 8pm

This morning we spoke of the unexpected journeys in life that are hard but are used by God for good. Tonight we address the breaking good news of “how Mary survived and thrived in her difficult journey of life as **she treasured these things.**”

Tonight we will catch a glimpse of how to get through the difficult unexpected journeys of life as we treasure the good things and times that God has given us.

Mary, for a young woman and mother, had a lot to treasure up and remember.



It began with the visit of the angel Gabriel with the message that God was going to grant her a son even though she was a virgin.



It continued as she visited her relative Elizabeth whose child, John, leaped in her womb when he heard Mary’s voice.

She must have been deeply touched by Joseph still taking her to be his wife after he found out she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.



It took a visit by an angel of God in his sleep to convince him, but he must have shared this with Mary and she treasured this further touch of God's protective hand on her life not only through the angel in Joseph's dream, but through Joseph himself.

Joseph who sought to protect her from scandal, poverty and even the Romans as he drug her along to go to Jerusalem for the census.



And then came the shepherds with their story of the angels message that Jesus would be The One. As they said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Eventually there was the visit of the Magi and their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And finally, the most haunting of all memories for her to treasure up were the words of the prophet Simeon, "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel,

and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.

And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Powerful positive words of encouragement, but also of warning and pain, "And a sword will pierce your own soul too." At the time she knew nothing of what those words would mean and only those who have ever lost a child can fully know what they mean.

The memories, the things saved up and treasured in her heart, I believe, helped her in her Son's painful journey to the cross.

O there were the good times when he began his teaching.



The crowds followed, the miracles flowed and nothing will make you more popular (for a little while) than his first miracle of turning water into a 130 gallons of good wine. But the crowds fell away, the clearer he spoke to them about who he truly was and what kind of Messiah he was going to be.



In his own hometown in the Synagogue he grew up in they were first amazed and then turned on him when he spoke the truth to them. They even drug him out to throw him off a cliff to kill him. Poor Mary, like any Mom would have gone from deep pride in hearing her son speak to horror as she saw what her fellow villagers tried to do.

And her rock Joseph? He was gone by this time most people figure. There was no earthly person there to stand up and protect her son.



Joseph had faded away just as he seems to be fading away in the picture on the cover of our bulletin. But Mary treasured these things. She must have remembered and thought, “If only my Joseph would have been here!”

The memories of our loved ones who have gone on can sustain us when the journey of life, the journey to Jerusalem is hard. We need to pause and remember and celebrate the days of health and life and peace for these memories can sustain us in the present and bring us hope for their return in the future, the New Heaven and the New Earth.

These memories and others sustained Mary as she treasured them in her heart.



(pause here to reflect)

These memories must have sustained her as she followed Jesus to the foot of the cross and watched him die there. A spear pierced Jesus' side, but a sword of painful loss pierced her soul.



These things Mary treasured in her heart as she went to the garden with the other Mary's all hope probably gone, but it all returned in an instance when she saw Jesus risen from the dead. Then the things she treasured in her heart lead her to share them with others that were written down for us to remember and treasure in our hearts.

The things of God, the memories of God working in our lives and the lives of others will sustain us when the journey of life gets hard. When suffering, illness, and death touch our lives we need to remember the resurrection.

When the challenges of growing older seem to take away more than they give; we need to remember the good times, the times we have treasured in our hearts to give us strength.

At Christmas time it can be a bitter sweet time. We can focus on what we have, or have had in the past that is good, or we can focus on what we have lost, or never gotten. We can treasure up the good and bring that out and remember when the times are hard and the journey is long and it will give us hope and even happiness.

Take a moment now and remember your favorite Christmas. If you are young it might be this Christmas or a Christmas yet to come, but if you are older take a moment.

Remember your favorite person, a special gift because of who gave it, and for a moment soak in that glow of that memory, because tonight is a night of memories.

Bring out of the treasure of your heart and life experience a memory that can sustain you like the memories Mary held.

PAUSE TO REMEMBER

SHARE A MEMORY

And now let us remember the night of Jesus' last supper and the New Covenant in his blood as we celebrate a special Christmas Eve consecration of the elements for a special time of memory.