**Treasure and Ponder**

R.Giglio 12-21-20

Tonight we celebrate Jesus’s birth. The moment that He, God’s only begotten son came into this world to dwell among us, save us and redeem us.

We will focus on Mary

The teenage, virgin mother whose experiences were unmatched by anyone else in human history.

We will look at her experiences, before, during and after Jesus’s birth,

But most importantly, we will focus on **her response**, to the entire experience of becoming the Mother of the Lord.

After everything takes place leading up to and during the birth of Jesus, Luke tells us...

 *“Mary* ***treasured up*** *all these things and* ***pondered them*** *in her heart.” (*Luke 2:19)

***“Treasure Up****” – that means to save up, value and protect your precious memories*

***“Ponder****” – That means, bring them up and think about them thoroughly, enjoying every single part of each experience.*

**The Birth of Jesus**

**Luke 2:1-19**In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. **2**(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) **3**And everyone went to their own town to register.

**4**So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. **5**He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. **6**While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, **7**and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

**8**And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9**An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10**But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. **11**Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. **12**This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

**13**Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

**14**“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
    and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

**15**When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

**16**So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. **17**When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, **18**and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ***19But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.***

Mary had witnessed so many extraordinary and miraculous things in the last 9 months, that she must have been completely overwhelmed.

From the moment the Angel Gabriel came to her back in Nazareth with *“the annunciation”,* the shocking announcement that she would be the virgin mother of “Jesus” God’s own son, she has been on a whirlwind of a journey that included:

1. She became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit
2. She went to Judea and personally saw the pregnancy of her *much older* relative Elizabeth.
3. She witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit come upon Elizabeth’s pre-born baby and even Elizabeth herself at her arrival.
4. She revealed to her fiancé’ Joseph, that she was pregnant and was told that he would “put her away secretly”.
5. She was soon told by Joseph that he had a dream, where an angel told him “do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21**She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name **Jesus.**
6. She immediately got married. (Matt 1:24)
7. She was told that while she was pregnant they need to temporarily move away from her hometown of Nazareth to her & Joseph’s ancestral village of Bethlehem (about a 90-mile, four-day journey), because of a Roman census.
8. When they got there, she was ready to give birth, but there was no room at “the Inn”.
9. Then it happened….**she gave birth to Jesus!….**
10. Because they did not have a room or home to stay in, she wrapped her newborn baby boy in strips of cloth and laid him in a feeding trough.
11. While she and Joseph were dwelling there in the darkness of a cave or stable, marveling at their brand new baby whom God had given them to care for, they were suddenly interrupted by a group of uninvited strangers from a nearby field.
12. These strangers were the shepherds, who reported that they had been visited by angels who told them the good news of great joy that The Messiah was born tonight and he’s in Bethlehem, wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a feeding trough.
13. After seeing Her and Joseph and their baby, they left and spread the word about it throughout the whole region, and everyone who heard about it were amazed, and marveled at what they were told.

And once again Mary and Joseph were alone with their baby.

***and “Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”***

All this happened in 9 short months.

Before that, Mary was just a teenager from Nazareth who was engaged to be married to a local carpenter. Now she did not know where their journey would take them next.

* Where would they live?
* How would they raise this boy?
* Will the Angels who visited the shepherds come to her and Joseph as well?
* Will they help them, guide them? Protect them? Provide for them?

Those questions would have to be addressed and answered someday, but not now…

Now was time to watch, and think, and remember all that had just happened.

It was time to be *in the moment* and not miss it.

What was happening to her, was up to that point, the greatest moment in history.

***So “Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”***

Soon everything would change.

The shepherds told everyone about the baby, so now they were instantly famous.

They would soon take him to the temple, and have his identity as Messiah affirmed by a devout man named Simeon, and a prophetess named Anna.

They would soon move into a house where a glowing star would rest right above it in the sky.

Soon after they would be visited by Magi, from the East who would follow that star, come and worship Jesus and bring him expensive gifts..

After that they would escape Herod’s massacre and move to Egypt, then eventually back to Nazareth.

But on this Silent, Holy night that she gave birth to Jesus, not knowing how it happened, or what would happened next..

 ***“Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”***

This is the only way to fully experience the joy, beauty and majesty of Christmas.

There are so many things we can think about, worry about or stress about,

But the essence of Christmas is found in reflecting on Jesus, and that powerful moment that God sent Him into the world, as a baby, modestly attired and humbly situated in a manger.

There are many other times to focus and reflect on the amazing things that Jesus said and did in His life.

Everyday, we can feel His presence and see His hand at work in our own Lives as we walk with Him.

***But tonight…***

 let’s take a silent, Holy moment to reflect on that special moment when, as John 1 tells us;

**John 1:14** “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Every Christmas Song and Christmas scripture, reveals aspects of His glory. It shows us the incredible love that He has for us to leave the paradise in heaven with his Father, and come to this fallen world, knowing he would experience evil, darkness, suffering and death.

**Our response** should be as Mary’s was. To take a moment in the silent, holy night of Christmas eve and…

***“treasure up all these things,***

***and pondered them in our hearts.”***

***“Treasure Up****” – that means to save up, value and protect your precious memories*

***“Ponder****” – That means, bring them up and think about them thoroughly, enjoying every single part of each experience.*

**This Christmas, let’s Treasure Up, and Ponder Jesus in our hearts.**