

Daily Devotional, December 22, 2021 The Memories We Treasure

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." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2:15-19 (NIV)

One of the things that I've noticed in the Christmas story in the Gospel of Luke, is that he keeps checking in on Mary, paying a great deal of attention to her. So much so, that some Bible commentators speculate that the memories of Mary were a large resource for Luke's gospel. In Chapter 1, we hear a conversation between this young girl and the angelic messenger Gabriel, followed by a long poetic song, the Magnificat, which Mary sings in praise to God for raising up the lowly, poor, and hungry. Mary, herself may have known what it was like to be lowly, poor, and hungry. And yet God has taken special notice of her and entrusted her with the holy duty and joy of becoming the Messiah's mother.

In these verses, Mary listens closely to what these shepherds have come to report. They heard the angels sing about the birth of the Messiah, pointing out how he could be found in a manger in Bethlehem. She hears about the Glorias sung by angels for her own child. Everything she hears fits with what Gabriel told her about the child. She adds it all up and gathers it all close to her heart. From time to time, throughout the rest of the gospel of Luke, we hear a memory of hers about Jesus, and that she "treasures" each of these in her heart.

As Mary cares for her son, she puts together this "treasury of memories" of her son: who He is, who He is said to be, His destiny and role, His character and actions. With each memory, she finds confirmation of what Gabriel had told her: Her child is the Son of God.

Luke pays attention to this young woman of no great importance—except that God found her trustworthy and important enough to grant the keeping of His Son to her. She treasures her thoughts about Him, and gathers her memories and treasured thoughts together to help Luke make a full picture of her Son and her Savior. We do that, too, as we live with Jesus day after day. We add to what we know about His faithfulness, His power, and His grace, day after day. And if we, like Mary, treasure these thoughts in our hearts, our memories of Him through scripture and our personal walk with Him, will increase our faith and our strength.

Prayer: Dear Lord, it is important that You favored a simple young girl like Mary, and that you didn't select a princess in a palace but someone ordinary to raise your only son. We are thankful for the memories of Him that He treasures, which have helped us get a full picture of our savior. Help us to also draw close and experience Him, as we put together our own experiences of Jesus. Lord, surprise us every day with new inspirations from Your story as we draw closer to Christmas. Through Christ, our Savior and King, Amen.