

Treasuring and Pondering

a sermon
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Trinity Reformed Church
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Luke 2:1–20

“Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”

I love that line.

“Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”

I’m not entirely sure why I love it so.

“Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”

I think it’s because it makes me wonder:

wonder *how* Mary treasured those words she heard from the shepherds;
wonder about the thoughts her pondering prompted;
wonder about the feelings these all stirred up in her.

Does it make you wonder, too?

It makes me wonder because there is, for me, a fair bit of the mysterious in Mary’s treasuring and pondering.

That fits. Because this whole thing was filled with mystery:

of angels,
and shepherds;
of humility,
and obedience;
of godly hope,
and divine promise;
of immaculate conception,
and the Holy Spirit’s mission;
of incarnation,
and salvation.

“Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”



I suspect that Mary treasured and pondered,

not just for a few days, or weeks, or months,
not just until Jesus was weaned,
not just until he became verbal,

but for the rest of Mary's life.

As Jesus grew, from baby to child to adolescent to man, she surely returned to the words and events from that night, and from even before,

recalling them,
repeating them,
considering them;
probing them for their deepest meaning,
asking what they might be telling her to do.

There must have been times when it was hard:

when he got lost
(or rather, when she didn't know where he was),
when he made people think he was crazy,
when he made people angry,
when he was arrested,
when she saw him put to death.

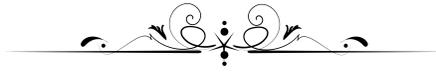
Even then, I'm sure, she went back to that treasuring place within her heart, and she pondered.

There must have been times when it was glorious:

as he grew,
as he loved
as he blessed;
when he precociously discussed the scriptures with scholars;
when he turned water into wine;
as she heard of his teaching the crowds
and feeding the multitudes,
and healing the lepers,
and challenging the arrogant;
when he came to her again,
no longer dead but alive,
the same, but more,
her son, and her Lord.

Then, too, I'm sure, she went back to that treasuring place within her heart, and she pondered.

"Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart."



It seems to me that many people make too little of Mary. They think of her as weak. They question what she knew. (“Mary, did you know?”) They treat her as irrelevant. So they think that she has nothing to tell them, no word to give them, no example to offer them.

Or, some people make too *much* of her, and doing so in a way they still makes too little of her. They elevate her, but really they just put her on a pedestal, like a priceless museum piece, and they put her away. They look at her uniqueness, and see everything about her as unattainable. So they think that she has nothing to tell them, no word to give them, no example to offer them.

Consider what strength she must have had:

to say “yes” to God in that way;
not only to give birth to Jesus, but to *be* his mother;
to go back, again and again, to that treasuring place, and to ponder.

This was the strength of faith. This was the strength of remembering God’s promise and trusting in it. This was the strength of knowing that, in treasuring and pondering the good news of this son of *hers*, she would come to know even more the mystery of the son of *God*, and that in him she would find joy.



My friends, this was, and is, the strength available to all the beloved of Christ.

And for that reason, even more I again wonder about Mary’s pondering. I wonder whether we might learn from her. I wonder what might happen with us, what God would make of us, if *we* treasured all the words of and about Jesus and we pondered them in *our* hearts.

I believe that it would make a tremendous difference in how we lived, and in what we felt, and in what we did. It would make a difference in our values and in our choices. It would make a difference in what we held onto, and what we gave away. It would make a difference in ways that could not be seen but also, really, in ways that could be seen.

Surely, it would be life changing. We, and many around us and even beyond us, would be changed.

So I urge you:

treasure the good news Jesus carried and told and taught and lived and gave,
treasure the words he spoke and still speaks today,
treasure these and ponder these in your hearts as a daily act of worship.

May we all follow Mary’s example. May we all treasure the words of Jesus and ponder them in our hearts.