

Luke 2:19 – “Treasure In A Manger”

As we've been studying through the book of Matthew here on Sunday's, a theme has been developing as of late, it's the theme of treasures and storing up riches in heaven.

Matthew 19:21–23, *"Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have **treasure** in heaven; and come, follow Me."*²² *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for **he had great possessions**.*²³ *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is **hard for a rich man** to enter the kingdom of heaven."*

Matthew 19:29, *"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life."*

What we've been addressing in these passages is that riches can easily distract a person from true surrender to Jesus, and potentially cost them the gift of eternal life with Jesus. It happened in the life of the rich young ruler.

Now you may be asking what does this all have to do with Christmas? Well, Christmas is a time where we can easily get caught up and distracted by possessions and material things. These things can become the focus for us. But as we've been seeing in Matthew, there's something greater to be living for. Something greater to be treasuring.

It's interesting that after Mary had given birth to Jesus and contemplated the enormity of the events transpiring around this significant time, we read in **Luke 2:19**, *"But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."* The idea here, as is captured in other Bible translations like the ESV, NIV, NASB and others, is that Mary **treasured up** all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Long after the visits, and adulations, Mary's heart would remain full with what she has received. Many people had not yet comprehended the magnitude of this moment. Many had not yet realized this birth signified the revelation and salvation of God. But Mary's heart was rich with what she had witnessed. What was it that Mary treasured up in her heart?

1. The Great Grace of God – Luke 1:26-33

Luke 1:26–33, *"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" ²⁹ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*"

We don't know much about Mary before this incredible angelic announcement happened. But here's what we do know, she was living in Nazareth, she was betrothed to Joseph, which meant they were legally married, but they hadn't yet consummated the marriage. That's made clear because it says she's a virgin. Now none of these things are uncommon things in this day. This right here is pretty common fare. There's nothing about Mary that's causing anyone to think, this girl is going places. This girl has got that 'it' factor! At least to my knowledge.

Yet God calls upon her for one of the most amazing experiences – to carry and give birth to the Son of God! Mary must have had this thought going through her mind on repeat, *Why me??*

Indeed, that's a question we could all give some thought to, *Why Mary?* But the more important question is, *why us?* Why did God take any of us and allow us to be brought into a relationship with Him? Why would God send His Son to this world on a rescue mission to forgive us and save us? That's the beauty of God's grace! Grace is getting what we don't deserve.

You and I have been given the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus. None of us can say we deserved that. None of us can say we lived a good enough life by which we earned that. It's all by grace. And I can imagine Mary pondering in her heart the amazing grace she was shown in being chosen to have this kind of blessing. But may you realize today the blessing that is yours through Jesus Christ.

- **Luke 11:27–28**, *"And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the*

womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!"²⁸ But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"²⁹

2. The Great Power of God – Luke 1:34-38

Luke 1:34–38, "Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren."³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible."³⁸ Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her."

Now, I can totally understand Mary being a little confused by all she's having to download from the angel Gabriel. She's being told she's going to have a baby, yet she's a virgin.

- And by the way, I've heard some pretty ridiculous clips this year of some very liberal pastors teaching their churches that Mary was not a virgin. And that Luke was only trying to make what Isaiah said fit into this account and fulfill this prophecy. And that the word Isaiah used for virgin could have simply meant a young girl. So Luke was of course really stretching things by insinuating that Mary was an actual virgin; because that would obviously be impossible they say.

But I don't think Mary is wrestling with heavy doubt, or is denying this. She's only wondering how this is going to happen. And I love the response of the angel: *the power of the Highest will overshadow you*. There is power with God. Power to do what man says is improbable and impossible. That's why the angel reminds Mary, *with God nothing will be impossible*.

- Whatever you're facing today that seems insurmountable, God is able. Matthew 19:26 reminds us that *with God all things are possible*.
- You may wonder how any of that can be true, but we have to only remember that God sent His Son in to this world to save you and redeem you. **Romans 8:32**, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Mary took all these things in, and though I'm sure she wondered how it will all play out, she concluded with, *Let it be to me according to your word* (**Luke 1:38**).

- Faith can be a tricky thing, but when we realize the great power of God, the stumbling blocks to our faith decrease.

3. The Great Revelation of God – Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew 1:18–25, *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." ²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus."*

Imagine what things would have been like for Joseph. Hearing his wife is pregnant and he knows he's not the father. Up until this point Joseph hasn't received the revelation of God. He's ready to put Mary away – to divorce her. He's wondering how he's going to save face. What is he going to tell others? But now he's visited by an angel to reassure him of the promises of God and the purpose of God. Joseph's wife is pregnant from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son and His name will be Jesus, which means Jehovah saves. His very name represents the reason He came. He came to save people from their sins. But not only that, Joseph is given the prophecy from Isaiah that this child's name will be Immanuel – God with us. What a revelation. What an awesome realization that this baby is going to be God in the flesh and dwelling among us.

Imagine the boost of excitement Mary must have received hearing that she's the one that is fulfilling this prophecy spoken hundreds of years earlier.

That's a lot to take in. I'm sure she was treasuring the magnitude of this situation and the excitement of the Word being fulfilled through her.

And what a word it was. This baby that Mary just bore is to be Immanuel – God with us! For hundreds of years the voice of God had been silent. People must have been wondering if God had moved on. Was the world just left on its own now to fizzle out. Did God renege on His promises? But there in Bethlehem was the realization that God was not done. In fact, God has now come and revealed Himself like never before. His promises are coming to fruition as they always do! **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."*

4. The Great Witness of God – Luke 2:15-20

Luke 2:15–20, *"So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."¹⁶ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them."*

Here we have the first responders. And I love that God chose to reveal this truth to shepherds. Shepherds were not reliable people back in this day. They weren't trusted, their testimony couldn't even be used in court. And yet, God chose to use these Shepherds to be the first witnesses to the incredible birth of the Messiah, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

I'm sure the irony wasn't lost on Mary. She sees the Shepherds come in and then just as quick begin to go tell everyone. And everybody marveled at what was told them by these Shepherds.

The realization in this is that God came to save all people. This is not a truth reserved for the good, the pure, the religious. This is a hope for all mankind. Jesus came to save each and every person. Shepherds may have been the outcast of society, but they are accepted before God. Praise the Lord for this!

John 3:17, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."*

Conclusion:

When all the festivities have come to an end, what will you be treasuring? All of the things we participate in are wonderful and have their place, but none of these things brings about lasting peace and joy. That's found in Jesus alone. He is the true treasure. May you hold on to Him above all, may He be your focus and hearts content. May you see the treasure we have *in* Jesus and *because* of Jesus that was never meant to be experienced just one day of the year but rather every day of our lives.