

NIV Luke 2

1 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 his 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 room for them in the inn.

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 of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ 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, and on earth peace to men 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.

19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

INTRO - I've done quite a bit of pre-marital counseling lately, helping people get ready for a wedding. Weddings can be sort of crazy times, with lots of preparation, lots of spending, lots of food, for a big day, a big celebration. But, do you know what I always tell the couple, and I include it in prayer. I tell them, it's not about the wedding, as much as it is the marriage. It is good to celebrate, because marriage is important. But what really matters is the on-going faith and love for the marriage.

So, last night was a big bash, a big celebration. Today is when we have an opportunity to live in the love of God we celebrated last night.

I. How do we live in the Christmas joy? Mary gives us an example.

A. We are told in Luke 2:19 **19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.**

1. Mary is doing 2 things. First, we're told she treasured, or kept.

A. Have you ever kept a diary?

B. Have you ever memorized events? That's what Mary's doing.

2. But, this writing down was done for another purpose, she kept these memories, these things told her by the shepherds, so she could ponder them.

A. The Greek says, she cast or threw them.

B. She brought them up, she considered, she thought about, she found strength in the events of Christmas.

B. We have others in Scripture who ponder, or meditate. I even printed out a small Bible Study for you to follow to get the idea.

1. Psalm 111 says, *1 Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly. 2 Great are the works of the LORD; they are*

pondered by all who delight in them. 3 Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. 4 He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and compassionate. Pondering her is a joyful remembering - sort of worship!

2. But there is more than remembering.

A. Psalm 64 :9 says, *All mankind will fear; they will proclaim the works of God and **ponder** what he has done. 10 Let the righteous rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him; let all the upright in heart praise him!*

B. Psalm 119: 95 *The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will **ponder** your statutes.*

C. Remembering God is a way to live, it gives strength for life and its trials.

3. Meditation in Scripture is also, not a short term activity, but something long term that God's people do.

A. Psalm 1 shows thinking about God, and his ways as a practice for life, 1 *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he **meditates** day and night.*

B. Psalm 77 gives us another picture of worship. 11 *I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. 12 I will **meditate** on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds. 13 Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? 14 You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. 15 With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph*

C. Joshua talks about meditation as part of a Godly life of discipleship, following, of obedience. Joshua 1:8 *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

II. Do you see the good news?

A. God's love and strength are not just for one night, one day, one season a year.

1. His deeds give strength, and help.
2. He acts give delight.
3. He saves through knowledge and faith.

B. So, let me encourage you to ponder.

1. Consider, delight in, rejoice in God's love on Christmas.
2. Don't forget how God helps you through life, in Jesus dying and rising.

CONCLUSION - A marriage is not just for the wedding day or night, but till death do us part. The mighty acts of God are for eternity. Let us treasure and ponder His love, and live in His strength and salvation. Amen