

Christmas, 2009

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.

19 h` de. Maria.m pa,nta suneth,rei ta. r`h,mata tau/ta sumba,llousa evn th/| kardi,a| auvth/jÅ

And Mary kept / treasured up all these things considering / casting around in her heart.

20 kai. u`pe,streyan oi` poime,nej doxa,zontej kai. aivnou/ntej to.n qeo.n evpi. pa/sin oi-j h;kousan kai. ei=don kaqw.j evlalh,qh pro.j auvtou,jÅ

And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen just as it was told to them.

INTRO - This year we had a wedding, among many other family activities. So, we planned and traveled and worked, and the wedding took place. Family and friends had traveled from 13 states. We spent time together, played and celebrated together, and prayed together, and the wedding was a blessing, not only for Andy and Justine, but for all who participated. But, after all that work, and planning, when the wedding is over is that it. Is it over, done, forgotten. Ah, we have pictures, lots and lot of pictures. On my computer at home I have 10 CD's full of pictures, and another 8 folders full of pictures. We get to keep going back, and looking at the pictures, remembering the people, the friends, the family, and the blessings. In fact

I. Now, please consider the people in the Christmas story.

A. That was some adventure,

1. They had the trip, the shepherds, the angels, the good news.
2. So, when it was all over, did they forget?

B. Listen to verse 19. **19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.**

1. I studied these Greek words for today.
2. When we are told Mary treasured, it means she keep the thing that had happened, which she was told. Mary kept, remembered, kept safe all these stories and memories.
3. That's sort of like my pictures of the wedding, organized, titled, kept in various places for safe keeping.

C. But then, she didn't just write them down for posterity and put them away, we are told **Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.**

1. The word pondered means, consider, think about, keep trying to learn.
2. Actually, the Greek words say she cast them around. She looked at them again and again, thinking about what happened, learning from the events, considering and growing in the mystery, the power, the glory, the love of God at the birth of Jesus.

II. Last night was a big blow out here at St. John. Postcards went out. Big crowds showed up. We had seven special anthems. Candles were lit. So, when Christmas Eve service is done, do we just forget it for another year?

A. I believe we can learn from Mary.

1. In fact, we know what Mary treasured. We have it written down.
2. She remembered the trip, and not place for the Savior of the world to be born, other than a manger.
3. She remembered the common local shepherds being visited by heavenly messengers.
4. She remembered the words of the angel, good news, great joy to all, a savior, Christ the Lord.

5. She remembered the heavens lit up with a glorious song of praise,  
“Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.
- B. So, as you treasure, as you ponder, as you cast around in your mind, what strikes you? What did you learn for the first time, or learn again? How is God speaking to you?
  1. Is it the love that causes the Almighty God to be born humbly for us in a manger?
  2. Is it the power and gentleness of the angels?
  3. Or, is it the power and good news of the message, joy, a Savior, peace, God’s good will and pleasure.
  4. Or, is it for you the rest of the story, that the love of God born our Savior as a baby, is the same one who will die for us, and rise again?
- C. The angels tell us the Savior was born “to you”, and for you. It is worth it to keep taking out these memories, to consider them and grow from the mystery and wonder of God’s love become flesh.

CONCLUSION – In September and October I attended a meeting in Portland. Actually, I had been to this particular meeting every year since 1994. And while I was listening, well, I had my computer on, and went to the picture album, and clicked on the “slide show” command for 2009. God has been good. We have been blessed with love and the hand of God. In fact, one of the secretaries from the district office told me, “Move over. Your in the way. I’m watching those pictures with you.” You might say we could have both gotten in trouble. But, I was remembering, treasuring, and pondering the blessings of the past year.

So, I have a request, an assignment for you, if you will. When you go home to day and sit down to Christmas dinner, go around the table and ask the question, “What is your favorite part of the Christmas story, and why? You’ll be following in the example of Mary, who **treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.**