

Pondering and Treasuring

Luke 2:41–52

On this first Sunday of Christmas, once again we find Mary pausing to wonder what all of this means. Here, in this story of Mary finally finding her lost son, she is “treasuring” all of these things in her heart.

Mary is a thoughtful person. Nothing that is happening is getting past her attention. As such, her pondering, her treasuring, her keeping all of the words, considering all of these events, should tell us something—something very important about our own responses and reactions when it comes to major life and faith events. Christmas should indeed be one of those major faith events. Yes, Christmas is a celebration that should be a cause for us to take a look at our lives. It is a common practice to review and refocus at the end of one year and the beginning of another.

Christmas isn't over yet, at least on the church calendar. While the rest of the world is already busy taking down the lights and packing up the ornaments, we find ourselves in this rather counter-cultural place where Christmas still matters. Mary reminds us an essential act of discipleship is taking time for reflection. Because none of what God is ever up to is easy to understand right away.

I invite you to not pass through or get through another Christmas without some kind of major re-evaluation, some kind of significant reorientation, some kind of pondering and treasuring, or, at the very least, some sense of questioning and wondering what all of this means. Mary invites us into that contemplative space, a space to ponder God's place in and purpose for our lives. Mary summons us to sit and wonder.

Silence is too often interrupted with the noise of thoughtless words and meaningless chatter, with sentiments and attitudes that have not had due time to steep, with viewpoints and beliefs that have too swiftly jumped to conclusions and that have allowed assumptions to take over.

We are quick to respond, quick to answer, and quick to interject without adequate thoughtfulness about our lives and words and relationships. Without taking time to appropriately interpret what has been and where things might be going. This Christmas season, this New Year, take time to ponder what it means; “God became a human being and came into the neighborhood.” What does it mean for you? What does it mean for our neighborhood? What does it mean for the world?

Mary reacts to crises by pondering and treasuring in her heart. What is Jesus doing staying in the temple? What is God doing interrupting her life? When Mary faced the shame of becoming an unwed mother she pondered what the angel said to her and what it meant. When the shepherds' tell Mary and Joseph what the angels said, she ponders it in her heart. And now when she copes with the increasing independence of her twelve-year-old son, she “treasures all these things in her heart.”

How might Mary's response be an example to us? How could you respond more contemplatively and prayerfully to the events in your life? What event in your life needs more pondering instead of worrying, fixing, or withdrawing?

Think about it – Pray about it – Live it

Bob