

Monday

Luke 2:15-20

Treasure the Lord's Work

"Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

Isn't it refreshing to read the Christmas narrative during Lent? The angels are singing of the Messiah's birth. The shepherds are praising God because they've just seen this holy Child. Bethlehem is bursting with travelers. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus are bedded down in the animals' quarters.

Amidst all this hubbub, Mary *stops and ponders*. We know relatively little about Mary, other than that she was young (likely in her mid-teens) and from Nazareth. However, Luke makes it quite clear that Mary's faith is mature beyond her years. When told that she will bear the *Son of God* in her womb, Mary responds in faith, "I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Mary pondered the saving work that the Lord was accomplishing in her midst, and with Mary, we treasure the saving work that her Son accomplished for us at Calvary's cross!

Thank You, Jesus, for treasuring me so much that You were born of the virgin Mary and suffered and crucified for me. Amen.

March 5

Wednesday

Mark 3:31-35

God's Will & God's Family

"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35).

This week we've been reminded of Mary's faith at Jesus' birth. We've seen her heart breaking at the cross. But today we see Mary (and Jesus' siblings) in a different light. As Jesus began His ministry, His family was baffled. His authoritative teaching seemed to come out of the blue. Word was spreading that He was doing supernatural things. Jesus' family were concerned that He had lost His mind! (Mark 3:21) How difficult it must have been for them to believe that their son/brother was the Son of God!

While Jesus' certainly loved His biological family, Jesus came to create a *new* family, united by faith in Him. He cares for His family of faith in just as great a way as He cared for Mary and Joseph and His brothers and sisters. He declares that *you* who do God's will are His brother or sister. What does Jesus mean by "doing God's will"? His words in the Gospel of John clear things up: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him who He has sent" (John 6:29). You, a beloved believer in Jesus, are His family!

Jesus, thank You for adopting me into Your family of faith. Amen.

Tuesday

John 19:25-27

Behold, Your Mother

He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" (John 19:27a)

March 6

Thursday

Philippians 3:4-9

No Greater Thing

I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. (Philippians 3:8)

March 8

That He found Himself hovering above the earth, nailed to a cross, for the sake of all the people who gathered around Him is a reality that is not to be missed or underemphasized. His mother, Mary, was there. She watched as her dear Son's life faded. She listened as evil men derided Him. She smelled the dust and blood and sweat of condemned men. She felt the fulfillment of a prophecy made to her at least thirty years earlier by an old man at the Temple: "and your own soul will be pierced". Most certainly was this mother's heart wrenched in two. Jesus knew that His mother would need care, so from His cross He made arrangements for her with his beloved disciple, John. Jesus always knows our needs. In fact, He knows them better than we do. Often, before we even ask, He is already at work providing for us, just as He did for His mother. Jesus is amazing! Mere minutes after Jesus made these provisions for Mary, He made provisions for the rest of humanity by offering His life as a sacrifice to pay the price for our sins!

Lord, take care of us, Your needy people and grant us Your grace. Amen.

Lord, you are all I need. Thank you for all the other gifts you still give. Amen.

Friday

Ephesians 5:1-2

Walk in Love

"Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us" (Eph. 5:2a).

Paul's letter to the Ephesians includes a "table of duties"— God's will for us as Christians, as husbands and wives, as children, and as employers or employees. (I encourage you to read Ephesians 5 and see how Paul describes these duties.) Fulfilling our Christian duty begins with *love*. God's will for us is to walk in love, not because we earn brownie points with Him, but because He has so richly loved us! The love of Christ is beyond our comprehension in its breadth, length, height and depth! (Ephesians 3:18) Absolutely nothing can separate you from His amazing love! You are 100% secure in His love. You are saved, redeemed, justified, and free! You are free to love your neighbors because your sin is finished, your salvation is accomplished, and your eternal home is prepared! You are sent to love family members and coworkers, friends and strangers with the love that you have received from above. God already loves you and me to the fullest, so why withhold His love from others?

I love you, Jesus, because You first loved me. Amen.

Saturday

1 John 3:1-3

God's Children

Beloved, we are God's children now. (1 John 3:2a)

It's good to be someone's child. It means you belong to a family. In good family situations, it means you have a mom and dad who care deeply for you and make choices that are for your good. To be situated within a family means you have brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, nieces, nephews, sons, daughters, and grandchildren of your own. Family, ideally, is wonderful. Family, however, has a way of sometimes being less than ideal. We don't always see eye to eye, a reality that brings tension.

Through Christ, we are brought into a new family. Jesus has covered us with His shed blood and made us sons and daughters with Him of the Father. With so many siblings in the faith, we're bound to have some disagreements. Let us never lose sight, however, of just how special and precious it is to be loved so deeply by the Father that, for Christ's sake, He chooses to call us sons and daughters. When put this way, things have a way of falling into place as we count the needs and concerns of others as greater than our own!

Jesus, thank you for loving us and making us children of Your Father. Amen.

March 9

Thy Will Be Done

**Daily Devotions to
Accompany our
Scripture Readings for
the Season of Lent**

Week 4