

“Time Out! . . . to Reflect”—Luke 2:19

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Time Out! . . . to Reflect”, is Luke 1:19 → *Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

The alarm rings to awaken you out of sleep. You drag yourself out of bed in order to get in a shower before the onslaught of the tasks of the day which lay ahead. You wake up the children and try to herd them together all dressed and ready for daycare and/or school. Maybe you can squeeze in breakfast before heading out the door in a rush to drop off the kids and get to work on time.

Your day is filled with tasks, peoples’ demands, challenges galore and the constant needs of the many—which at the moment feels like it outweighs the needs of the one. You! On the way home you stop to pick up the kids and deal with any concerns which may have risen during their day. In an effort to get them to hockey, tee ball and gymnastic practice you stop at the fast food drive up, order them supper and listen to them scarf it down on the way to practice.

By the time you've dropped everyone off, went home to change and eat supper, it's time to pick them all up again. When they hit the door the task at hand is homework or other activities and before you know it's time for bed. After the kids are in bed you can finally visit about your day but only after you've checked your facebook or watched your favorite TV shows. Then it's off to bed before it begins again the next day.

Admit it . . . no matter what our circumstances there is so much with which we have chosen to fill our lives that it is very difficult to call a "time out" to reflect on anything during a day with a certain amount of quality, let alone to reflect on Jesus. I praise God that you have called a "time out" tonight to be here in worship to reflect on Jesus and the "time out" He took to leave the glory of heaven for you!

Taking time out of our everyday activities gives us a chance to do some serious reflection as we take a good look at ourselves spiritually. However, self-reflection can be very scary because we may not like what we see in ourselves. We may have to face our failures, mistakes, frustrations and, more importantly, our sins. When Jesus encountered people during His earthly public ministry it caused a lot of self-reflection because He revealed the sins of people's hearts. The uneasiness experience by taking "time out" for self-reflection in solitude and quiet may be the very reason why we keep busy with

those things outside of ourselves and make sure we always have noise. No one wants to face what they don't like to see.

This is why it is necessary to do self-reflection **on the basis of God's Word daily**. In the midst of the blessing of "busyness" in our daily lives we can easily become spiritually "bankrupt." Relationships get strained, resentments grow strong and idolatry takes over in an effort to either manipulate everything and everyone around us or allow it all to control us. As guilt is left to run rampant without proper confession and absolution there is no peace that only God's Word can give you as you reflect on the work of Jesus for you. "Time out" in Jesus is essential to experience forgiveness and peace.

I can only imagine the reflections which Mary and Joseph went through as God's plan of salvation unfolded in the birth of Jesus. Much of what transpired leading up to this birth may not have been filled with peace. Certainly there must have been quite a bit of self-reflection. This self-reflection could have been heightened by the words of Simeon to Mary forty days later in Luke 2:34-35 → *Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.*

Our text tells us that *Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.* What things? Perhaps not only being pregnant as a virgin at such

a young age but also the words of Gabriel → *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.* (cf. Luke 1:35) Or the words of her cousin Elizabeth in Luke 1:43 → *Why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* Or maybe the news of the shepherds who showed up, telling them about the angel's announcement that her baby is the *Savior, Who is Christ the Lord.* (cf. Luke 2:11) No pressure here!

Notice the focus of Mary's reflections or pondering. In essence, what Mary treasured in her heart was that this baby was the God-given Messiah, Whose birth signals glory in heaven and peace on earth. (cf. Luke 2:14) The place you will find the peace in the midst of the turmoil of life is in Jesus. Taking time out of each day by reading a portion of Scripture and prayer can remind you of the forgiveness of your sins in Christ! Taking time out to confess your sins to God and one another as well as pronounce absolution to each other brings the peace which only Christ can give! Christ is that which you treasure most in your heart as you ponder His Person & Work for you!

Taking time out to reflect in Christ is not just analyzing, examining, studying, investigating, scrutinizing, evaluating, questioning and considering your life, trying to make sense of it all. That usually leads a person into more turmoil and efforts to control it. **Rather, reflecting in Christ is more a matter**

of submitting to Him in simple faith and continuing to live each day with confidence. Analysis produces more questions and even inappropriate action many times.

While it may seem with all the angelic revelations about the birth of Jesus that Mary had a pretty good idea of what this was all about, it doesn't mean that she actually understood it's unfolding and impact in the lives of all people. Mary's analysis produce the question: *How will this be, since I am a virgin?* (cf. Luke 1:34) But her final response to Gabriel in Luke 1:38 reflects humble submission to God's will for her life despite inability to understand it all: *Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.* Faith leads to action in worship and service to our Lord Jesus Christ!

When you reflect and meditate on the basis of God's Word it shows you how God took care of your sin in Jesus once and for all! Through that Gospel the Holy Spirit also empowers you to act in faith and service to the Lord Jesus! Through the Word the Holy Spirit will bring you *the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding to guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* (cf. Philippians 4:7) As you treasure God's working in your life by His grace you will grow in a love for Him, a love for His Word, a love for the worship of Him and a true love for others. As you ponder His Word in your heart you will be able to confess along with Mary: *Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let*

it be to me according to your word. Amen.

Oh how I love Your law, O LORD! It is my meditation all the day.

(cf. Psalm 119:97)

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