

Looking into Mary's Heart and Soul

Part Five: Love and Courage

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:40-52

In our last discussion we saw Mary face a prophecy of her son's sufferings that would be to her like a sword passing through her soul (Luke 2:34-35). This would be difficult knowledge to handle. The apostle Paul gave us a list of qualities that describe God-like love (I Corinthians 13:4-8a). Among other things, love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, and does not fail. That will consistently describe what is in Mary's heart as she raises her child to adulthood and then has to step back and let her adult son do His work.

Mary's son grows and matures – Luke 2:40

It is a paradox to us that the perfect Son of God become human and submitted himself to the human process of growth and development (Philippians 2:5-8). This process would eventually require suffering (Hebrews 2:9-10; 5:7-9). The qualities of growth and development, that are described in Luke 2:40, 52, are also described in Isaiah 11:1-4a.

Mary's son reveals His love for Scripture truth – Luke 2:41-48

Joseph and Mary, as usual, were attentive to the ordinances and feasts that are prescribed by God's law for Israel. In observing the Passover, they traveled to Jerusalem, taking Jesus with them. When Paul is talking about the purity of the church, in I Corinthians 5, Christ is called "*our Passover*" (I Corinthians 5:7).

A mistake was made by Joseph and Mary. As they left Jerusalem to go home, they assumed that Jesus was in the group that was travelling together. However, He was not with them. A day into the journey and the parents realized this and turned back to Jerusalem to search for Jesus. After three days they found Him at the temple, listening to the learned doctors / teachers of the law, asking them serious questions – also giving answers! See John 18:37. Jesus was twelve years old. This is the age a son formally became "*bar mitzvah*" – a "*son of the commandment*." His full participation of synagogue life would begin at the end of that year. Prior to that, a son was taught at home by his father. Therefore, Jesus was an astonishment to those who were in the temple. He was no ordinary boy, just entering the first stage of his religious life!

However, Joseph and Mary were more than astonished at what He was doing. They had been very distressed at the unexpected absence of their son. Their natural parental care caused sorrow, as they looked for Him. This was not yet the sorrow that would be like a sword passing through Mary's soul, but it was a taste of what it was going to be like raising the Messiah. He was operating under the influence of His Heavenly Father. His method of operation would be pure, but unpredictable – a challenge for any normal parent.

Mary's son and the Father's business – Luke 2:49-52 cp. Psalm 27:4

Jesus' response was to ask Joseph and Mary why they were looking for Him. They should have known that He would be at His Father's "house" (this is the word used by many newer translations) doing His Father's "business" (literally, the Greek says "*in My Father's things / affairs*"). He had not aimlessly wandered off to just look at the sights of the big city. They need not have taken three days to search. They could have just come to the temple! This was confusing to Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:50). Parents usually have the unhappy task of thinking the worst-case scenario. They anticipate all the wrong things their children might do and try to prevent or correct the problem. Jesus was a child that would be naturally doing something good. They would have to trust Him – trust the Heavenly Father with Him. Jesus was careful to be subject / obedient to His mother and adoptive father (Luke 2:51-52). He would be a perfect son to them, but that also required that He be subject / obedient to His Heavenly Father and be perfect towards Him!

Mary had other children to care for as well (Matthew 13:55-56). Yet she would continue to ponder the story of Jesus in her heart, loving Him and His ministry in a special way. She would follow Him and His gospel as much as she could (John 2:1-5,11-12; Matthew 12:46-50; John 19:25-27; Acts 1:8-14 – Mary probably gave information for Luke's gospel – Luke 1:1-2). Continually, Mary would remember that the story of Jesus would include personal sorrow and pain (Luke 2:34-35).

Can we follow Mary's example?

Can we anticipate the sufferings of Christ in our life with the same overcoming love and courageous faith as Mary demonstrated in her life? Many are being told (and many want to be told) that a relationship with Christ costs you nothing. They are promised that health, wealth and prosperity are for those who ask Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. Many become disillusioned and abandon the faith when suffering and persecution come into their lives for Christ's sake (Matthew 13:3-9,18,20-21; Luke 14:25-35). Salvation is free, but it is not cheap. The Son of God gave His precious blood to secure our acceptance with the Heavenly Father. The result of receiving that precious gift is that you enter a war zone (I John 3:1,13). Your loyalty to Christ will be tested in many ways. Where the will of God leads you, the grace of God will keep you. What Satan uses to try to destroy you, God will use to strengthen you and make you more useful in His kingdom (Luke 22:31-32). This is not for the faint-hearted. Faithfully seek the Lord for the power of His love to give you strength and courage (Psalm 27:1-4; 105:4; John 15:1-8; I Corinthians 16:13; II Corinthians 12:7-10; Ephesians 3:14-19; 5:1-21; 6:10-20; II Timothy 2:1-10).

It has been said, **God's purpose in the future requires some pain in the present.** Consider God's many warnings of sufferings in this life along with the promises of future glory and reward. See Matthew 10:16-39; 16:21-27; John 16:1-33; John 17:4-22; 20:19-21; Philippians 2:5-18.

See also Acts 14:19-22; Romans 8:14-18,35-39; II Corinthians 1:5-7; 4:6-18; 6:1-10; Philippians 1:27-30; 3:8-10; I Thessalonians 3:1-13; II Thessalonians 1:1-12; I Timothy 4:10; II Timothy 2:8-13; 3:12; Hebrews 13:10-14; James 1:2-8; I Peter 1:3-9; 4:12-19; 5:10.