

"But Mary kept all these things and treasured them in her heart." Luke 2:19

When I was a child we buried some "treasured" items in a coffee can somewhere on our farm in Michigan. The plan was to find it later and discover our "treasure"! I don't remember finding it. Too often in life we lose the things we once treasured. People treasure their friendships, but it is rare for a friendship to last a lifetime. We treasure our children, but as they become adults and independent, we feel the loss as parents.

It was the custom of the Jews to go to the Temple once a year. Joseph and Mary took their family, including Jesus when he was 12 years old. They traveled in a large caravan. On the way back to Nazareth, they noticed Jesus was not with them. They returned to Jerusalem and found him teaching in the Temple. People were astonished at Jesus' understanding and answers to their questions. They returned with Jesus to Nazareth and Mary "treasured all these things in her heart".

Have you had moments in your life where you felt treasured by someone? Perhaps it was expressed in a thoughtful note or gift. Moses met God on the Holy Mountain and gave him the Law that the Israelite people were to follow. Moses wrote, "the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth." God treasures His children!

We treasure things that have rich meaning to us and they are worthless to others. Tim Maloney, a college coach, has said to me on several occasions, "use things and value (treasure) people, but do not use people and value (treasure) things." Past civilizations and their treasures lie in ruin beneath our feet. Archeologists are continually finding them.

Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." When God created the world, He commanded the light to shine out of darkness. He has also shone in our hearts the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. We have this treasure of Christ in our hearts in our earthly bodies. This treasure within is ours even though sometimes we are perplexed, despairing, and even crushed. Job was a man who suffered greatly! He asked, "Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, who long for death, but it does not come, and search for it more than hidden treasure?" Each of us has experienced the bitterness of life that can turn us into bitter people. One of the places bitterness shows is in our face.

I have found that spending time alone with God, and treasuring what I have in Him, has been so valuable! In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Pondering on this relationship...

Christmas Devotional written by Mike Sigfrids, AIA Basketball Affiliate Staff.

Merry Christmas!

From the staff of Athletes in Action Sports Performance.
May you treasure this time with God, your family and friends.