

MOMS and MORE

(1/22/10)

TREASURES THROUGH TRIALS

(by Cathy Clarke)

INTRODUCTION:

Moms encounter many kinds of trials:

*As mothers, we don't start out knowing about all the problems!

As we explore what treasures can be found in our trials, my hope is that you will be encouraged to face whatever your future holds with your hearts and hands open to God.

I. Treasure Worth Suffering For

A. Perseverance is precious to God

Consider it pure joy my brothers whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. (James 1:3)

testing - proving genuine (your faith)

persevere - to endure; to stay behind, stand firm

*Staying or remaining with God through the trial.

*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the **crown of life** that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)*

*Trials are temporary - The Crown of Life is eternal!

B. A Treasure Already Possessed: Relationship with Jesus

1. *To them (the saints) God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the **glorious riches** of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. (Col 1:27)*

* No life circumstance can change this reality!

2. *My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the **full riches of complete understanding**, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely **Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**. (Col 2:2-3)*

* complete knowledge of God and His ways

C. What do these treasures have to do with our trials?

1. when Jesus lives in us, trials bring opportunity to know Him more!

a. opportunity to experience God Himself

b. opportunity for life-changing conversations with God!

-ask God for help and insight

- receive His specific instruction

- bring to God my overwhelming fears and emotions

2. *Christ in us*, empowers us to *persevere* under trial

II. Personal Story

A. I Remember the Wonder of the Blessing

1. overcome with joy and excitement, dreams of the future

- what will he be like? Who will she become?

- so beautiful! ...what a miracle!!

2. looking forward: uncertain but hopeful

“This is gonna be great!”

B. Trials Came

1. Little did I know ...as I held each of my babies...

- sleepless nights, endless diapers, chicken pox!

- emergency room visits, a son with a disability

- rebellious attitudes, school detentions,

calls from police station

2. Little did I know, as I held little Kevin, and dreamed of his future, that 21 years later I would stand in front of his flag-draped coffin.

Certainly the loss of Kevin is the hardest thing I've ever had to face.

C. My greatest trial was preceded by a very special conversation:

When Kevin left for Iraq, I brought my questions and fears to God.

Overcome by fear, I questioned what trusting Him really meant when there were no guarantees of Kevin's safety...

“How can I say I trust You, when I don't know what You're going to do?!”

“*Will you only trust me if I promise to give you what you want,*

or will you trust me because I'm God??”

“I trust You to carry out Your plan. **What if** it's your plan to take Kevin?”

“**What if** I take Kevin? *Would that mean I cease to be God?*”

Would everything you ever believed about me no longer be true?”

“No, You are God and You are good!

But Lord, I'm afraid of the pain!”

*“Whatever you might have to endure because of Kevin, I will get you through it, **I will carry you!**”*

“OK Lord, Kevin is Yours. I entrust his life **and** my life into Your hands. Whatever happens, You are God and You and Your purposes are good!”

*Taking hold of godly treasure involves a surrendered heart!

- letting go of something or someone
- we have to let go in order to receive

When the news came to us that Kevin had been killed in a fire-fight, we were filled with shock and disbelief. Nothing made sense. But somewhere underneath the debilitating pain was a sure confidence that my Almighty God was at the center of this, and that Kevin was in His loving care.

D. My greatest **treasure** is the experience of **Christ Himself**

1. I saw the intricate work of His hand; Kevin's written testimony
2. I heard the encouragement of His gentle whispers
3. I felt overwhelmed by His love and His presence
4. I hold the memory of that amazing conversation
5. I know the fulfilled promise of God Himself sustaining me

* Nothing/no one can take these away from me!

III. Mary's Story

A. The Wonder of the Blessing

1. the angel's message (Lk 1:26-35)
2. Elizabeth's greeting (Lk 1:39-45)
3. Mary's Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55)

My soul glorifies the Lord and my Spirit rejoices in God my Savior...

4. the shepherds' response (Lk 2:8-19)
5. the prophecies of Simeon, Anna (Lk 2:25-38)

What kinds of thoughts might Mary have pondered?

B. Mary's Trials - Little did she know...

1. pregnant as a virgin (Matt 1:18-19) _____
2. journey to Bethlehem while pregnant(Lk 2:4-5) _____
3. Herod seeking to kill her child (Matt 2:16) _____
4. Jesus disappears at age 12 (Lk 2:41-50) _____
5. Raising a sinless child _____

6. When Mary held her infant Jesus, did she know that thirty-three years later she would stand at the foot of a cross, watching Him suffer and die?! (John 19:25-27)

*What might have gone through Mary's mind as she faced this greatest trial?

Have you ever had the thought: "It wasn't supposed to be this way" ?

C. Mary had a Conversation with God (Lk1:26-38)

1.Mary started with a surrendered heart:

"I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. May it be to me as you have said." V38

2. Mary finished with steadfast faith (Acts 1:13-14)

“Peter, John, James and Andrew... They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus...”

What treasures do you think Mary took hold of ?

CONCLUSION: *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. (2Corinth 4:17)*

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is there any aspect of either of the two women's stories that you identify with?
2. How often do you consider your relationship with Jesus a treasure?
3. In what kinds of circumstances are you tempted to give up on God?
4. What things (or people) do you tend to hold onto, not trust God with?
What affect does the truth of “Christ in you” have on your anxious grip?

SCRIPTURE

THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE (LK 1:26-37)

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called \square the Son of God.

³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."

ELIZABETH'S GREETING (Lk 1:39-45)

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

THE SHEPHERDS' RESPONSE (Lk 2:8-19)

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ \square the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

THE PROPHECIES OF SIMEON, ANNA (Lk 2:25-38)

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you now dismiss your servant in peace.
³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.