

JOSEPH & MARY: Great Privilege – Great Confusion

THE GLORY:

Joseph & Mary: Privilege Personified

Luke 1:26-49/ Luke 2:8-40/ Matthew 1:18-2:23

BEYOND THE GLORY:

Blessed Doesn't Always Mean Easy Street

Luke 2:6-7/ John 6:42/ John 7:3-5 & Luke 8:19-21/ John 19:25-27

TABLE TALK:

Isaiah 55:8-9/ Hebrews 11:32-40/ Ephesians 2:10

- ❶ God tells us **what to do** – He doesn't tell us what **He will do**.
- ❷ Sometimes doing the **right thing** brings the **wrong results**.
- ❸ Never judge a painting by the **first few brush strokes**.
- ❹ We all have a **role to play** in God's great **story**.

Food for Thought

For the week of December 23, 2007

1. This weekend's teaching took us behind the scenes of the first Christmas and the incredible life story of Joseph and Mary. We saw that it was not only a life of great privilege, but also a life with some great confusion as well. As you reflect on the message, what point, statement or insight was the most helpful to you in better understanding how God works in our lives and our world?

2. How can the prayer in Ephesians 3:14-4:5 help us in the midst of life's confusion? Which statement would be most important for you to remember?

Ephesians 3:14-4:5

For this reason I kneel before the Father, [15] from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. [16] I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, [17] so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, [18] may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, [19] and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

[20] Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, [21] to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

[4:1] As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. [2] Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. [3] Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. [4] There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- [5] one Lord, one faith, one baptism; [NIV]

3. As the events of that first Christmas unfolded, “Mary **treasured** up all these things and **pondered** them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19)

Luke 2:19

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. [NIV]

In order to see God's work in the midst of life's **confusion**, we too need to take time to “ponder” God's work and Word in our life. Find a few minutes to get away by yourself to re-read the Christmas story (Luke 2:1-20) and ask God to help you see the evidence of His fingerprints in your own life as you live out the role you've been called to play in His great story.

Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. [2] (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) [3] And everyone went to his own town to register.

[4] So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. [5] He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. [6] While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, [7] and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

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

[13] Suddenly 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."

[15] When 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."

[16] So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. [17] When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, [18] and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. [19] But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. [20] The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. [NIV]