

Luke 1:39-45

“Blessed Mary”

December 20, 2015

I was reading in a Bible Dictionary. I wanted to know what the term “Blessed” meant. When blessed is used of God it usually means; “Let God be worshipped and adored.” When blessed is used of man in the Old Testament it usually means; “Men are fortunate, happy because they are blessed by God materially.” When the term is used in the New Testament it usually is a term used for faithful Christians. It is a term used to describe those who suffer because of their faithfulness. There is seldom any clear indication of the nature of the blessedness. However, it is in some sense a reward for faithfulness in suffering at sometime in the future.

This thought led me to reflect upon Mary, the mother of Jesus who is called “Blessed” among women. First Mary endured the shame of having a child that was not her husband Joseph’s. Can you imagine the gossips talking about her. Then she had no home to deliver her baby. Instead they had to stick Him in a manger in a cave where they kept the animals. Third they were forced to go into exile in Egypt because the Great King Herod sought to kill Him. Fourth Mary watched her son die on the Cross at Calvary. Then she was told that John, the Disciple, was to replace Jesus as her caregiver in her old age. No wonder Mary pondered the

meaning of the things happening to her. I am sure that she pondered many times over the things happening to her as she endured the suffering of being the mother of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior.

Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist doubted the angel Gabriel when he was told that he and his wife would have a son in their old age. In his doubt, he had the ability to speak taken from him until John was born. In contrast, Mary the mother of Jesus', was told that as a Virgin, she would give birth to a son. She trusted the word of the angel Gabriel. I believe that Mary was chosen because of that trust. Mary needed that trust to carry her through the uncertainties and suffering that would be hers as the mother of the Messiah, the Savior Jesus Christ.

Trials seem to come our way as well. Suffering is an ever present reality in all our lives. For some suffering comes in large doses all at once. For others, their suffering seems to be continuous over a long period of time. Imagine that you were one of the family members of the victims of the terrorists attacks. Or imagine that you have gained the nickname "saint" because of all that you have endured. God allows suffering even for the most blessed of women, Mary. God allows suffering because that is the sinful flesh as work. If God were to take away the suffering that comes from the devil, the world and our sinful flesh, He would have to eliminate us all because we are the ones who bring suffering in one form or another into our world.

Instead God brought peace into our world through the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who enjoy this peace the most are the ones who trust God the most like Mary. The ones who enjoy this peace the most are the ones who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior with the strongest of faiths. Those who trust know that God will give us the gift of eternal life and we wait eagerly for our heavenly home. Those who trust know that suffering is part of this world and we don't need to blame God for the suffering that we endure because God sends us His love. Yes, He disciplines the sin in us, but He does not cause loved ones to die, cancer to invade our bodies or terrorist to cause so much hurt and pain. If you don't, then learn to trust Him.

This is the last Sunday of Advent. How are you doing at preparing your soul to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Like the thief on the Cross at Calvary, it is never too late to prepare our hearts to celebrate the Christ Child. Remind yourself why we give gifts. In this time of love, we remember the love of God who gave His Son to be our Savior. In this time of love, we remember that love means self-sacrifice not make me feel good. In this time of colored lights, Christmas trees and great meals, we remember that there was no room for the family of Jesus except where they kept the animals. Like Mary, we can only ponder on the Christ and wait for our time to join Him because we trust in Him.

Amen