

A Mother's Heart **or** The Heart of Loving Mother

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While hanging on the cross, despised and rejected, Jesus saw His mother, and commanding her attention, said, “Woman, behold your son” (John 19:26). What did Mary think as she set her eyes upon the tortured, bleeding body of her dying boy? There was much to choose from because Mary had spent her life as a mother filling her heart with Him.

A Mother's Heart Keeps Joy

Leaving their flock, shepherds came to Mary and Joseph at the manger and told them of the praise of the angel, and a multitude of the host of heaven, who proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth toward men of goodwill” (Luke 2:14). The occasion for this exultation was the birth of Mary's baby – the Savior, the Christ, the Lord – now wrapped in swaddling cloths. Word spread, and while everyone marveled at the news, “Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

Jesus, at the age of twelve, was about His Father's business in the temple, listening to the Jewish teachers and asking questions. Mary's child had amazed the scholars with His understanding, and the mother “kept these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51).

What other memories of her precious baby did Mary tuck away in her heart? Did she remember the sweet aroma of her newborn, or His sigh of contentment as His head snuggled in the cradle of her neck? How cute was it as He tried to speak His first words, and how lovely was the feeling of intimacy as she read to Him on Her lap? How great was it to know that when He was hurt He called for His mother. She was the only one who could comfort Him. Were there memories so wonderful and profound that Mary found it difficult to put them into words? Mary was “highly favored” and “blessed...among women” (Luke 1:28), but with all mothers she had in common a heart full of joy for the life of her child.

A Mother's Heart Keeps Pain

Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with their young child to save His life. Herod's murderous rampage in and around Bethlehem of all the male children age two and under was specifically designed to kill the Christ. Even after the death of Herod, they feared his son who replaced him.

Among the first to hear the Gospel message from Jesus were His fellow citizens of Nazareth who, in response, tried to throw Him off a cliff (Luke 4:29). The threats and attempts on the life of Jesus continued until Mary gazed upon her worst nightmare. Her dear child had been horrifically scourged, beaten without mercy, cruelly ridiculed, and nailed to a cross. They gambled for His garments. She saw Him take His last breath. His side was pierced with a spear. His burial was rushed because the next day was the Sabbath. All were images Mary would not forget.

When Jesus was presented in the temple as a baby, Simeon told Mary, "A sword will pierce through your own soul" (Luke 2:35). With mothers who have watched their children suffer, Mary had in common a heart full of pain.

A Mother's Heart Keeps Hope

Sitting in the upper room praying with the Apostles and others, Mary knew that Jesus had risen from the dead. She knew he had ascended to heaven and was exalted to the right hand of God. Mary had hope because the Son of God said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Mary had hope because the King of Kings promised, "...I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3).

Mary's expectation of the glories of heaven would have not only been for herself, but for all of her children also. What mother who loves her children will not do everything possible so that their souls might be anchored steadfast and sure by the hope of heaven? Eunice and Lois taught Timothy from childhood the Holy Scriptures, which made him "wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:5).

With mothers who keep the faith, and bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Mary had in common a heart full of hope. Thank you, God, for mothers who keep us in their hearts. May we, as their children, keep them always in our love.