



#2 In the Battlefront series

The Personal Front

Forest Park Church

May 8th 2022
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In the first pages of the Book of Genesis, immediately after the narration of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve, we are told what the history of humanity will be:

- a battle between the reign of God and the reign of darkness,
- a great battle between good and evil, obedience and sin.
- Also revealed to us is the promise of salvation given by God the Father
- who, in His great love for humanity, immediately offers a Savior after the fall.

Gen 3:15

God told the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the Woman, between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head while you will strike at his heel"

This morning as we celebrate mothers lets take a look at one mother who found herself on the front line of one of the greatest spiritual battles in history. How she responds is not only inspirational but leaves us with powerful tools we too can use as we face the personal front.

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I. Prepare for the unknown. (mind)

Luke 2:19:

3 *"But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."*

- This is Luke's Gospel, the third book of the New Testament, and one of three times this variation of "treasured" is used in the bible.
- Luke was a physician, intent on gathering evidence about Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

- After he “carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.” (Luke 1:3)
- Theophilus was “a person of rank, perhaps a Roman officer.” We know this because Luke addresses him as “most excellent,” but we are also certain that he was a Christian.

“But Mary **kept** all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.” (American Standard Version)

“Mary **remembered** all these things and thought deeply about them.” (Good News Translation)

“Mary was **preserving** all these things, pondering in her heart.” (Young’s Literal Translation)

The Greek word for “treasured,” **synetērei**, also means “kept safe.”

- The word synetērei is used once more in the Gospels,
- In Mark 6:20. Herod protected John the Baptist (kept him safe) for a time before the dance and his offer to “ask me for anything you want, and I’ll give it to you.” (Mark 6:22)

1 John 4:4

"You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."

2 Cor. 10:3-5

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

1 Pet. 5:8-9

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith."

Rom. 8:37

"In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

1 Cor. 15:57

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

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Psalm 119:11

*I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.*

Luke 2:19..... applied What do we treasure in our hearts?

5 **II. The Battle is won in the heart.**

6 **Luke 2:51**

“Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.”

This comes from another memory of Mary’s when she and her family were traveling home after a trip to Jerusalem.

- They could not find Jesus and lost three days looking for him.
- Eventually, Jesus was located in the temple His Father’s House learning and discussing with the teachers.

“Dietērei” is used here; only 1 occurrence, the memory was one Mary kept to herself.

- There is a “tension” in the text: “at this moment in time,
- Mary may have almost entirely forgotten that Jesus was any different from any other child.
- All of the strange and wonderful things she was told..... were probably momentarily overshadowed by her frustration.”

The commentator reminds us that Jesus was growing in wisdom

- Yet he was also a boy with human parents who had lost three days of travel
- And possibly three years of their lives owing to their fear for Jesus
- They left their eldest son to be swallowed up by the city?

Mary kept this memory close, valued it. She had a lot to ponder:

- Confusion between her perception at the time versus reality

Three things we can do to keep the right things in our minds.

7 1. Fill your mind with timeless truth.

The more biblical truth you have in your mind when Satan attacks, the more likely it is that you'll win the battle.

- So make a habit of reading the Bible and reflecting on the words you read. Every day, ask the Holy Spirit to renew your mind.
- Then God's truth will come to your mind in any situation where your emotions are shouting at you to make a certain choice.
- As the Bible's powerful words will remind you of what's really true so you can make decisions from an accurate perspective.

8 2. Deal honestly with the uncomfortable thoughts that enter your mind.

Sometimes we want to deny, ignore, or suppress thoughts that trouble us.

For example, if you're feeling jealous,

- you're probably also feeling embarrassed and ashamed about feeling that way.
- No one likes to admit jealousy.
- Yet if you don't deal with it, envious emotions will distort your perspective on your life.

That will leave you vulnerable to Satan's attacks.

So whenever you notice you're feeling or thinking something that makes you uncomfortable, acknowledge it, and try to check in with God about it in that moment or soon afterward (through a silent prayer).

- Keep in mind that it's normal to experience lots of uncomfortable emotions in this fallen world, and that your emotions themselves aren't necessarily wrong.

What's sinful is choosing to respond to the emotions you feel in the wrong ways.

- So if you feel jealous of another person, you can feel that way and still be right with God if you confess how you feel to God and rely on his help to respond faithfully.

- But if you don't intentionally deal with how you feel, your jealousy will make you vulnerable to temptations from Satan to say or do something wrong when relating to the person of whom you're envious.

9 3. Stop and ask why.

Stop to reflect and pray during times when you realize that you are facing something bigger than you.

- Just like parents give children timeouts to teach them how to recognize and control their emotions,
- We should choose to take a timeout and check in with your heavenly father.

Ask yourself simple questions like:

What am I really feeling, and why.

- For instance, if you feel lust pulling you toward your cell phone and compelling you to look at pornography on it, stop the process by taking a timeout.
- Try to identify the emotions you're experiencing at that moment.
- If you can, figure out why you're feeling that way (maybe you've been dealing with stress that you're trying to relieve through porn).
- By forcing yourself to step out of the situation and study it, you can stop unhealthy impulsive behavior and gain a wiser perspective on what's happening.

10 1 Cor. 10:13

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."

11 III. The Last place you want to be is often the exact place you need to be.

On the Personal front we often find that:

All the gospels say that the female followers of Jesus witnessed his execution, but only the Gospel of John clearly identifies Jesus' mother as among them:

12 Jn 19: 25-27

And standing by the Cross of Jesus his mother, and the sister of his mother, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary, the Magdalene. Jesus, therefore, seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing by, said to his mother: "Woman, behold thy son." Then, he said to the disciple "Behold thy mother." And from that hour the disciple took her to his own (home).

Mary is present at the foot the Cross, not only as a loving mother, but also as a disciple who follows her Master unto the hour of His execution.

It is hard for us to imagine the suffering, the pain, the seeming cruelty of it all.

- We wear crosses around our neck as jewelry.
- We have totally lost the sense of the horror.
- A modern comparison would be to place a model of an electric chair on your wall or around your neck.
- The crucifixion was equally as repulsive. It was meant to be.
- It was meant to dissuade assaults on the Roman state.

This encounter between Jesus and his mother is heartbreaking and tender.

The woman at the foot of the cross is truly grieving. All she has for comfort are the memories of her child.

We can well imagine Mary pondering the prophetic words of Simeon uttered more than 30 years before:

13 **Luke 2:34–35**
"This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too"

Through the lens of grief, Mary could revisit those strange and wonderful encounters to answer for herself, "How did we get here?" The gospels emerge in much the same way: The death and resurrection of Jesus caused his immediate followers to radically reinterpret his words and deeds.

1 Conclusion:

John 16:33
"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Mothers fear for and pray for their children. Parents are often treated inconsiderately, even by well-raised kids. While these generally “good” children are forgetful and make mistakes, God never does.

Children’s negligence and our parenting flubs are not evidence that He is unkind or fickle. Even if sons and daughters commit crimes, walk away from God, become teen parents, or fall into any manner of danger or sin, God has a plan for their lives. God also has plans for their mothers and fathers. It’s a good plan.

While we might want to forget about the terrors of temporarily losing Jane at the mall or the embarrassment of having to explain that Johnny is in rehab, we will one day look back at disappointment and fear from a clearer vantage point.

Mary saw her son raised from the dead and glorified. We will one day see that life’s trials meant something. If our kids believe in Christ for salvation, even jail time won’t keep them from God in the long run.