

JOY WHEN LIFE IS HARD

(Luke 2:1-19)

- I. The COMMAND to REJOICE
 - A. To rejoice ALWAYS (Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16)
 - B. To rejoice in AFFLICTION (Rom. 5:3-5)
 - C. To rejoice when OVERWHELMED by TRIALS (James 1:2-4)

- II. The EXAMPLE of MARY
 - A. Her BLESSING—Chosen to be the MOTHER of the SAVIOR (Luke 1:26-33)
 - B. Her HARDSHIP—Chosen to be the MOTHER of the SAVIOR
 - 1. Unexpected, inexplicable PREGNANCY (Luke 1:26-38)
 - a. DISAPPOINTMENT of family
 - b. DISDAIN of friends and neighbors
 - 2. New TAX law, requiring a DIFFICULT trip to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1)
 - 3. No place to STAY in Bethlehem (Luke 2:7)
 - a. Town full of idle TRAVELERS
 - b. EMBARRASSED to ask a RELATIVE for help?
 - c. Accepted unsanitary accommodation in a STABLE
 - 4. Had to DELIVER the BABY in these circumstances (Luke 2:6-7)
 - a. Inadequate FACILITY and CARE
 - b. No INCOME

5. Had to FLEE to EGYPT to avoid the child's MURDER (Matt. 2:13-16)
6. Later, had to endure FAMILY and FRIENDS attempt to murder her son (Luke 4:16-30)
7. Eventually, had to WATCH her son be CRUCIFIED (John 19:25)

III. The SECRET to JOYFULNESS (Luke 2:19, 51b; Phil. 4:8)

A. How did MARY maintain her JOY?

1. She TREASURED UP the EVIDENCE that Jesus is the SAVIOR
 - a. The visit of the SHEPHERDS
 - 1) Revelation of heavenly GLORY (Luke 2:9)
 - 2) Revelation of SALVATION (Luke 2:10-12)
 - b. The visit of the WISE MEN
 - 1) The sign of the STAR (Matt. 2:1-10)
 - 2) The significance of their GIFTS
 - c. The pronouncements of Simeon and Anna that the REDEEMER had come (Luke 2:34-38)
 - d. The wisdom and dedication of the youthful Jesus in service of his FATHER (Luke 2:41-51)
2. She MEDITATED on the TRUTH that Jesus is the SAVIOR

B. How do WE maintain our JOY? (Phil. 4:8)

1. Treasure up the EVIDENCE that Jesus is our SAVIOR
2. Meditate on the TRUTH that Jesus is our SAVIOR
 - a. Anticipation of heavenly GLORY (Rom. 8:18)
 - b. Confidence in present SALVATION (Rom. 5:6-8; 8:1a)