

A Great Meeting

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Bible Text: Luke 1:39-45

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Well, if you would, please turn to the gospel of Luke chapter one and we read beginning with verse 39 down to verse 45.

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."¹

Let's ask God's blessing on his Word.

Lord, we are so grateful for our Word, that you have given it to us. We know that you, Lord, gave breath. Through your breath you brought it into existence and it is living and active and sharp and able to discern the thoughts and the intents of our hearts. Lord, I pray for your blessing upon the proclamation of it this morning. I pray that you would be at work in our hearts and minds that we would be able to receive the things that you have written for us here through Luke and, Lord, I pray that the result would be that our lives are different when we walk out of this place today.

We do pray for anyone with us who isn't yours. Our prayer for them is for salvation, Lord, that their eyes would be opened, that they would see your Son for who he is and that they would trust in him.

Lord, we acknowledge our weakness, our inability, our frailty and that is why we look to you this morning and ask you for your blessing. We will give you praise for what you accomplish in Jesus' name. Amen.

¹ Luke 1:39-45.

Well, have you ever had a meeting with someone where you were ready to deliver to them some really important news or some really exciting news or have you ever gone to meet with some one that you haven't seen for a long time and as you begin to interact with one another the thought was, you know what? We have a lot of catching up to do. There is a lot of news for me to report on my end and I know there is a lot of news for you to report on your end.

Well, if you have had ever had a meeting like that and you have known the excitement of that and you have known the blessing of that, that you have some sense, at least, of what was going on when Mary and Elizabeth got together in the verse that we have just read. Never has there been a more exciting meeting than the meeting between these two women. Never has there been more important news that was to be delivered from one to the other than this particular meeting.

Gabriel has made two highly significant visits. He has appeared to Zechariah in the temple in Jerusalem to tell him that he and his wife Elizabeth are going to conceive a child and that the son to be born to them is going to be great. In fact, he was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. And then, six months later Gabriel makes a visit to a young Jewish woman living in an out of the way place in Galilee, a little town, a little village called Nazareth and there the news was delivered to Mary that she was to be the mother, by virtue of a virgin conception, she was to be the mother of the Son of God. She was to be the mother of the Messiah.

And in the midst of delivering that message, Gabriel gave to Mary, though she didn't ask for one, he gave to her the sign of Elizabeth's conception, the fact that she had conceived John.

Elizabeth was known to Mary as the barren one as we saw last week. Everyone knew that Elizabeth as barren and everyone knew that Elizabeth was past the age of conceiving a child. And so though Mary didn't ask for one, God just sort of saved up this sign.

Do you remember? Zechariah was made mute. He couldn't announce the news and then Elizabeth goes into hiding, as it were, for about five months until it was very plain that she was with child, until she began to show. She didn't tell anyone about it. So Mary didn't know about this until Gabriel came and delivered the news to her. So this sign was sort of saved up for Mary to strengthen her faith.

And this is something you see on more than one occasion in Scripture. You see God's willingness to help his people believe him, that God gives to his people a word, sometimes something very difficult to believe, but God doesn't just call upon his people to believe him, God actually is gracious and kind to strengthen the faith of his people, to help them believe.

Faith is a gift from God, but it is a gift that once we have been given it... You all know we weren't born with saving faith. Faith is given to us by virtue of regeneration. Faith becomes ours through new birth. Faith is a gift from God. But once we have received this

faith, we then become responsible for it. We are responsible to stand firm in our faith. We are responsible to make use of our faith. We are responsible to grow in faith. But even though we have this responsibility, God is at work in us. God is at work with us, enabling us to stand firm in the faith, enabling us to make use of faith, enabling us to grow in the faith. This is God's grace to us.

For example, second showing the responsibility that we have in faith, responsibility to grow, the responsibility to make use of our faith. Listen to a few passages of God's Word.

2 Timothy chapter two verse 22. Paul writes to Timothy and he says:

“So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”²

So we are to flee from sinful passions, youthful passions, but we are to pursue. I mean, this is something we are to be active in. We are to pursue righteousness and then he says faith. We are to pursue faith. We are to pursue a life of believing God. We are to be active in believing our God.

1 Timothy 6:11:

But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.³

Again, we are told we are to fight the good fight of faith.

1 Timothy 4:12.

“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”⁴

“Timothy, you are to be an example to the Church. You are a young man. God has put you in the ministry at a young age. They are going to be tempted to despise your youth. In fact, they were already doing it.” And he says, “Don't let that go on, but rather you put away their fears, put away their doubts through your example. And one of the areas you are to be an example in is an example of faith.”

2 Thessalonians 1:11.

² 2 Timothy 2:22.

³ 1 Timothy 6:11-12.

⁴ 1 Timothy 4:12.

“To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power.”⁵

“May God,” he says, “fulfill every desire you have for doing good and may God fulfill every work of faith by his power.”

There you are engaged in works of faith, faith works and may God fulfill your faith works with his power.

I just want to ask you this morning. Are you engaged in faith works? Is there... can you see in your life a working, an energy, an effort being made to pursue the Lord, to believe his Word? Can you say that you are engaged in faith works?

So we could pray for you that God would fulfill your faith works by his power?

2 Thessalonians 1:3.

“We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.”⁶

Could this be said of this congregation this morning that our faith is growing abundantly? So God saves us and in saving us he has granted us faith, but once we have been saved and we have faith, now that faith becomes a matter of responsibility on our part. We are to stand firm in it. We are to make use of it. We are to grow in the faith. And mark this down. If we are ready and willing to believe God, God is ready and willing to help us believe him. Let me say that again. If we are ready and willing to believe God, God is always ready and willing to help us believe him. God strengthens our faith. God confirms our faith. God is the one who sustains our faith, who energizes our faith so that if we are ready and willing to believe him, he is ready and willing to help us believe him.

A great example of this is found in Mark’s gospel. There was a man who had a son who was demon possessed. He was always being thrown into seizures and having fits as a result of the demon possession. And in Mark 9:21 the Bible says this:

And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”
And he said, “From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”⁷

Did you hear that? “If you can do anything, Jesus, I mean, if you can do anything about this, would you have compassion upon us and help us?”

⁵ 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

⁶ 2 Thessalonians 1:3.

⁷ Mark 9:21-22.

And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”⁸

And do you know what is interesting? Jesus never rebuked him for that request. If today we say it up to our God, “I believe you, help me believe you. I believe you, help my unbelief,” the Lord does not have rebukes for that kind of request. If we are ready and willing to believe God, God is ready and willing to help us believe him.

You say, “Richard, what does that have to do with our text?”

Well, just this. Mary has believed this impossible word that has been delivered to her from Gabriel. She has believed the Lord. That is going to be mentioned again in our text. But God is at work in a gracious and kind way strengthening her faith. God is at work, though she has believed God, God is at work assisting her belief, strengthening her belief, giving her reasons to believe hi, confirming her faith. And we see that in our text. In fact, we see God strengthening her faith in three ways. And we will look at these together this morning.

First of all, we see this in verses 39 and 40. God granted personal confirmation. Look at verse 39.

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.⁹

Now notice it says, “In those days Mary arose...”¹⁰

In what days? Well, in the very days when Gabriel appeared to her, in the very days when Gabriel announced to her that she was to be the mother of the messiah, that she, though a virgin, having never known a man would conceive by God’s power and the child in her womb would be called the Son of the most high. He would sit on the throne of his Father David. She was to be the mother of the Son of God, the mother of the Messiah.

In those days, in the days when she received that news, she arose and she went to see her relative Elizabeth in Judea in the hill country there, about 70 miles away, about a three to five day journey this young woman between 12 and 14 years of age, Mary, she would make her way to see Elizabeth. She goes immediately. Why does she go immediately? Well, because she is excited, no doubt. But also she wants to see with her own eyes. She wants to hear with her own ears what has been told to her concerning Elizabeth. She was told that Elizabeth, though barren, had now conceived. She was told that Elizabeth her

⁸ Mark 9:23-24.

⁹ Luke 1:39-40.

¹⁰ Luke 1:39.

relative was to be the mother of the forerunner. And this served as a sign for Mary and she wants to go and see it with her own eyes.

In fact, we know she must have left immediately, I mean, just within a matter of days because we are told previously that it was in the sixth month that Gabriel made his appearance to Mary in the sixth month, that is, of Elizabeth's pregnancy. So Elizabeth has been pregnant now for six months when Gabriel appears to Mary.

Well, if you look down to verse 56, notice what else we are told.

Verse 56.

“And Mary remained with her [with Elizabeth] about three months and returned to her home.”¹¹

So if Elizabeth has been pregnant for six months when Gabriel appears to Mary and if Mary stays with Elizabeth for three months, that tells us two things. Mary leaves Elizabeth right about the time that John the Baptist was born and it also tells us that Mary must have gone immediately to see Elizabeth.

So in the days, verse 39, in those days, in the days when she received the news, just a matter of days afterward, perhaps, or maybe even the same day, she arises and she goes, notice, with haste. She is in a hurry, into the hill country to a town in Judah. And there she enters the house of Zechariah and she greets Elizabeth.

And so, no doubt, you want to talk about a conversation. Right? Let me tell you what has just been told to me.

Now remember something. Elizabeth knows, obviously she knows, what is going on in her own body, what is going on as a result of the angel's appearance to her husband, but Elizabeth does not know about Mary. And so when Mary shows... and now Mary, she knows about Elizabeth. So when these two get together, you can just imagine how the conversation must have gone, how they began to deliver the news to one another, how they must have been amazed at the fact...

And, by the way, when you compare the way these two accounts are given, when you compare how Gabriel delivered the news to Zechariah and then how Gabriel delivered the news to Mary, I mean, it follows the same outline. And so as they begin to compare notes what was said to them, how it was said to them, how the news was delivered, what an exciting time this must have been.

So the first confirmation that Mary receives is just a personal one. It is just through conversation, she and Elizabeth talking with one another. And her faith is confirmed as she hears and she sees what the angel had told her concerning barren Elizabeth. Indeed,

¹¹ Luke 1:56.

she has conceived. Indeed, there is a child in her womb. She is six months pregnant and the forerunner is to be born to her. What wonderful news this was.

But now notice God not only granted this personal interactive kind of confirmation, God granted another kind of confirmation. He granted a physical confirmation. Look at verse 41.

“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.”¹²

I mean, Elizabeth is able to notice this is something different. This is not just that usual sort of stirring around, you know, six months into a pregnancy, the baby is growing. This is not that. This is something different. When she hears the greeting of Mary, John in her womb responds. He reacts. In fact, look down in verse 44 how she describes it.

“For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.”¹³

Now you will remember chapter one... look back at verse 13. Do you remember what we were told about John? Verse 13.

But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.”¹⁴

How do you explain this reaction of John in the womb of Elizabeth when Mary greets her? How do you explain this baby leaping for joy within the womb of his mother? The answer is: By the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit both in the Old and the New Testaments, we see the Holy Spirit coming upon people, empowering people, at work in people in order to enable them to give voice to the message of God. The Holy Spirit coming upon people to deliver prophesy. We are going to see that in just a moment in the case of Elizabeth. The Holy Spirit coming upon people in order that they might deliver God’s message.

Well, here is case of the Holy Spirit coming upon John in the womb of Elizabeth, not to give a message with voice, but to give a message through action, to give a message through a physical response.

In fact, if you talk to someone who is not here this morning and you want to have fun with a trivia question you can ask them: When did John the Baptist first bear testimony to Jesus as the Messiah? And the answer is: In the womb of his mother Elizabeth. That is

¹² Luke 1:41.

¹³ Luke 1:44.

¹⁴ Luke 1:13-15.

the first time he did it. And he did it in a mute fashion but in an unmistakable fashion when he leaped for joy at the presence of the mother of Jesus.

And so the Holy Spirit is already bearing witness to the Son of God through John, already bearing witness to the Son of God through John even before he was born. How that must have encouraged Mary's faith, personal conversation, what I heard. I see it now. I hear it now. And then Elizabeth says, "You know what? Even right now there was this physical confirmation, because when you greeted me, the baby in my womb reacted. He responded."

But the Holy Spirit is not done with that. He is not finished with that. He now moves upon Elizabeth to bear witness to Jesus in a verbal way.

Verse 41.

"And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry."¹⁵

Don't miss the involvement of the Holy Spirit here. Don't miss this because Luke wants us to see this. This is the Holy Spirit bearing witness to Jesus. First through John, but now through John's mother. And he is working in Elizabeth to give voice to the message he is about to deliver.

Why does he mention the Holy Spirit in verse 41? Because God wants us to know something. This message being given through Elizabeth, it is the message of God. This is God's testimony concerning his Son.

Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, verse 42:

...and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."¹⁶

What can we say about this blessing? This is what she is doing. She is blessing the Lord and she is blessing Mary. Two things I want to say about it. One, this is a blessing that magnifies Jesus. This is a blessing that magnifies Jesus. A work of the Spirit through a loud proclamation. I mean, Elizabeth is fully of joy and enthusiasm as she announces this. And what she announces magnifies Jesus.

¹⁵ Luke 1:41-42.

¹⁶ Luke 1:42-45.

What she says in verse 42, “Blessed are you among women,”¹⁷ she is not magnifying Mary. She is magnifying Jesus. The reason why Mary is considered blessed among women is because of the fruit of her womb, because of the child that she carries in her womb, because she has been chosen out of all the women who had hoped and wondered at what it would be like to be the mother of the Messiah, this young girl has actually been chosen to carry the Son of God in her womb. It is because of the greatness of the child that she is considered to be blessed.

In fact, you see another example of this where Jesus is being praised and as a result his mother is blessed in Luke chapter 11. Look over there if you would, please. We are going to come right back to Luke one. But look at Luke chapter 11. Look at verse 14. I am going to read a bit of a larger section just to put it in context. Luke 11 verse 14.

Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled. But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,” while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven.¹⁸

Now let’s just stop there. Do you ever just wonder at the stupidity of sin? He has just cast out a demon, right? Can you give us a sign?

Verse 17.

But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.”

As he said these things...¹⁹

¹⁷ Luke 1:42.

¹⁸ Luke 11:14-16.

¹⁹ Luke 11:17-27.

Right? I mean we have just been presented with a picture of the greatness of Jesus, of the magnificence of his person, the power of his ministry. He has cast out demons by the finger of God. The kingdom of God, of heaven is upon us. It is his greatness being manifested. Notice:

“...a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!”²⁰

Blessed is your mother.

Now was this woman blessing the greatness of the mother? What is the answer? No. She is blessing the greatness of Jesus and she says, “Your mother was a blessed woman. Whoever carried you was a blessed woman. Whoever nursed you was a blessed woman.”

This is not because of the greatness of the mother, but because of the greatness of the son.

Look back at Luke chapter one.

That is what Elizabeth is saying when she says in verse 42, “Blessed are you among women.”²¹

Out of all the women of the earth, you are most blessed. Why? Because, next statement, “Blessed is the fruit of your womb!”²²

Not only is John bearing witness to the greatness of Jesus, his mother is bearing witness to the greatness of Jesus. Elizabeth has been given a great privilege. Her son is going to be called great. In fact, Jesus said that her son was the greatest man ever born up till his time. What a great privilege Elizabeth has been given, but her privilege pales in comparison with the privilege of Mary.

In Elizabeth’s womb is the forerunner. In Mary’s womb is the Son of God.

Blessed are you among women. Not blessed am I.

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”²³

This is not only a magnification of Jesus, next verse, this is a confession of Jesus.

Verse 43.

“And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”²⁴

²⁰ Luke 11:27.

²¹ Luke 1:42.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Luke 1:43.

You know who has come to me? You know who is standing in my presence? The mother of my God. The mother of my Lord. This is a straight out confession of the deity of Jesus. Elizabeth, by the Holy Spirit gives voice to the fact that in the womb of Mary is the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Lord of glory, the Son of God.

Do you notice something? Do you notice Elizabeth's faith expressed in that statement? Because she doesn't say, "Why is this granted to me that the mother of the Lord should come to me?" Rather she says:

"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"²⁵

"In your womb is my Lord."

Notice the humility of Elizabeth.

She counts herself astoundingly privileged to even be in Mary's presence. Why should this be given to me that you the mother of my Lord should come to me?

So this is a blessing that magnifies Jesus, that confesses Jesus.

Does that mean, though, that there is nothing in Mary to be admired? No, it doesn't mean that, because in the next verse there is a blessing given that actually does magnify Mary. Look at verse 45.

Let's pick up with verse 44.

For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.²⁶

She is talking about Mary.

"You are blessed, Mary, among women and I bless you for this. You are blessed for this. You believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to you from the Lord."

Again, we recognize Gabriel is just a mouthpiece for God. The message that the angel has delivered is actually the message of the Lord. He was sent by God. He delivers God's message and here Elizabeth acknowledges that Mary had actually believed his Word. Zechariah didn't believe at first. That is why he was disciplined with silence. But Mary, though she asked a biological, question, "How is this going to be? How is this

²⁵ Luke 1:42-43.

²⁶ Luke 1:44-45.

going to work?” She wasn’t disbelieving. She was simply trying to understand how it was going to happen. She believed the words of God.

These confirmations, right, personal confirmation, a physical conformation and now a prophetic confirmation, these confirmations were not because Mary didn’t believe, but rather this is God graciously, kindly assisting the faith of his servant, confirming the faith of his servant, strengthening the faith of his servant Mary. And this is a reason to magnify Mary.

If you want to magnify Mary, magnify her for this. She was a woman of faith. She was a very young girl who believed an astounding message. We don't magnify Mary as a source of grace, as a dispenser of grace, because she is not that. We don't magnify her as queen in heaven, because she is not that. We don't magnify her as someone who was immaculately conceived, because she was born a sinner just like the rest of us. We don't magnify Mary as someone who was bodily assumed into heaven because that is not how she went to heaven. We don't magnify Mary as a mediator for prayer, because she has never been involved, not one time, with our prayers, not one time. We don't magnify Mary as someone making appearances today, someone for whom shrines should be erected because she is not making any appearances today. She hasn't made any appearance since she died and went to be with her Lord.

We do magnify Mary as a young Jewish girl who was a sinner saved by the grace of God who had to place her faith in the very son she gave birth to. Mary had to trust in her son as Savior and Lord, because she was a sinner just like us. We magnify Mary as a true believer in God. We magnify Mary as a young woman who can serve as an example to us because she believed the Word of God even when the Word of God was most difficult to believe. She believed his promise that he would work this miracle in her body and that she would, indeed, be the mother of the Messiah. This is the Mary we magnify. And that is what Elizabeth says in verse 45.

“And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”²⁷

So let me close this morning with three questions for us in the way of application. First of all I want to ask you: Do we really understand this Jesus? Do you really understand Jesus as he is presented to us on the pages of God’s Word? Is that your understanding of him? Is that your attitude toward him? Do you have a real relationship with this Jesus who lived and died for sinners on a tree and then was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven and now actually takes up his presence in the lives of his people through the indwelling Holy Spirit and has fellowship with us and leads us and guides us and teaches us? Do you know him? Do you count the woman who bore him and nursed him to be blessed because of his greatness?

Listen, if a fetus leaps for joy in his presence, how should you understand him?

²⁷ Luke 1:45.

Second question—and it is a connected one. In fact, what I am about to ask you is an evidence that you do understand him. Do we manifest the joy of someone who understands him and knows him?

Listen, when Elizabeth goes to announce what the Spirit of God has produced in her heart to say, how does she say it? How does she say it? What does the Bible say in a mundane tone?

“Blessed are you among women.”²⁸

Is that what she does? What does she do? What does the Bible say?

With a loud cry. I mean there is enthusiasm. There is joy. This is unbelievable. The mother or the Messiah has come to me. And, of course, John in the womb when he hears the voice of Mary, the greeting of the mother of Jesus, how does John respond even in his mother’s womb? What does he do? He leaps for what? Joy. He leaps for joy.

By the way, if you ever wonder whether the child in a mother’s womb is actually a human being, he is able to respond to Jesus and according to Elizabeth, according to the Word of God, his response in the womb is one of what? Joy. Joy. This is a child. This is a human being.

I don’t say it to be cruel. I say it to be truthful. That is why abortion is murder. It is murder.

I wonder how many times does our mundane reaction to Jesus betray our unfamiliarity with Jesus? To know him is to rejoice in him. To know him is to celebrate him. To know him is to be enthusiastic about him. There is something wrong when we talk about the greatest person in the universe and the greatest news in the world, the good news. Isn’t that what the gospels refer to it as? Isn’t that what the word means? Good news. The announcement that sinful men can be reconciled to holy God. Something is wrong when we can think about these things, meditate upon these things, sing about these things, talk about these things as if they aren’t real, as though it has no effect upon our person at all.

Do we manifest the joy that says we get it, we understand this Jesus, we know him?

I wonder how many times just the way we worship serves as a rebuke to us. We sing songs mindlessly without any emotion. We talk about the Lord with one another in repetitive ways that just become rote. Our heart is not engaged. Beloved, it doesn’t mean you don’t know Jesus. It means you need revival. I mean, when we get to the point that he doesn’t light our soul on fire, we need revival.

Which gets to my third question. Mary is celebrated in verse 45 for her faith.

²⁸ Luke 1:42.

“And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”²⁹

I want to ask us. Can we be praised for our faith? Can we be celebrated? Can we be set forth as an example? Remember what Paul said to Timothy? You be an example. Don't let anybody despise your youth. You be an example for the believers in faith. Let your faith be an example.

Do you know what I have discovered about myself and what I believe I have discovered about you, too? I think there is a part of us that really wishes we could live a life without any need for faith. No tests, no trials, no hardships, nothing that would ever threaten to make us afraid. We would like a life where there would be need to trust God.

Aren't you grateful that our God knows better? Because what he very apparently knows about us is we to regularly have all the false things we trust in jerked out from under us. He knows that we regularly need to be put into situations where our only hope is him. And that is where we are called to live, in the place where our faith is stretched and tested and stressed and we learn what it is to trust in his promises.

He promises he loves us. he promises he is sovereign. He promises he will meet all of our needs. He promises that he is enough, that he is our inheritance. He is everything we need.

“Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.”³⁰

He is enough. And I just wonder if your life today says that he is enough, if someone can look at your life and my life and say, “You know what? There is someone who walks in faith. There is someone engaged in faith works. There is someone who believes the promises of God when they are the most hard to believe”?

Blessed are you because you believed the Word the Lord spoke to you. Can that be said of you?

Let's bow together for prayer.

Father in heaven, we thank you this morning for the prayers that you have answered in ways that we would have never asked for. We thank you for the perfect wisdom that is on display in all the events of our lives, that you have taken us and you are taking us down roads that we would not prefer. But the only reason we would not prefer them is because we are so small and unbelieving and foolish. We thank you that you are willing and ready to strengthen our faith, that if we will cry out from an honest heart, “I believe you, please help me to believe you,” Lord, you don't discipline us of that. You grant that

²⁹ Luke 1:45.

³⁰ Psalm 73:25.

request. And so I pray for myself and I pray for my brothers and sisters this morning that we would be a people who could be set forth as an example of what it means to believe you. I thank you, Lord, for our Savior. I thank you for what we are learning about, how he came into the world, I pray that we would all look to him and I pray for anyone in this place who hasn't looked at him as their Lord. Elizabeth referred to him as her Lord and, Lord, I pray for anyone who can't say that this morning that before this day is over they would be able to say that Jesus is mine, Lord. And I ask you for this in Jesus' name. Amen.