**Week of Dec 22, 2019**

**1 Luke 1:39-56**

**Key Verse:** “46 And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,”

(Luke 1:46-47)

**Mary Visits Elizabeth**

**39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”**

**Mary’s Song**

**46 And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. 50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. 51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.” 56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.**

**Understanding the Scriptures**

Today’s lesson highlights the relationship between Mary and Elizabeth. Mary and Elizabeth were from different tribes. Most theologians agree they were cousins. In verses 5-23 of chapter 1 of Luke, the scripture records Zechariahs encounter with an angel that told him that his wife, Elizabeth would become pregnant with a son who would later be known as John the Baptist, forerunner for Jesus Christ. This news came as a shock, because up to this point Elizabeth had been barren, and now she was very old. Elizabeth did become pregnant, just as the angel said.

In verses 26-38, Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel. The angel told Mary that se was chosen by God to the mother of Messiah-Jesus. Mary accepted God’s special mission. Shortly after receiving he news about God’s plan for her life, Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Some biblical scholars believe that Elizabeth and Zechariah lived in a village of Ein Karem, which was eighty miles from Nazareth, where Mary lived. It would have taken Mary nine or ten days to make the journey to see Elizabeth

When Mary saw Elizabeth, immediately the baby in Elizabeth’s womb leaped and, at the same time, she was filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed to Elizabeth that Mary was going to the mother of Jesus. Elizabeth rejoiced and her reaction gave Mary assurance that the angel’s message was true. Mary’s response to Elizabeth’s words of encouragement are recorded in a song. The song is often called “Mary’s Song” or “The Magnificant”, in which Mary expresses her awareness of God’s intervention in the lives of God’s people and her thanksgiving for His making her the vessel of God’s redemption. The Magnificat highlights God’s care and protection from generation to generation, as well as His compassion for the marginalized in society.

Christians should follow Elizabeth’s example. Elizabeth rejoiced and encouraged Mary that she would be blessed and encouraged Mary that she would be blessed because of her acceptance of God’s will. Both Mary and Elizabeth surrendered to God’s divine plan, and they were a source of encourage to each other.

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