

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"A JOYOUS VISITATION"

For individual study or discussion

As we continue our Advent series, we note that the first chapter of Luke focuses on the moment before the entrance of the Christ child, when significant social, religious, cultural, and political events are taking place. The stage is set for the Lord's Incarnation, bringing God's blessing to the marginalized, the poor, and the outcasts of society, starting with *a joyous visitation* between two women who play enormously important roles in the history of salvation.

The larger context for the road trip (vv. 39-40)

Having learned from an angel that she will give birth to the Son of God, Mary hurries to visit her pregnant relative, Elizabeth, in the hill country. According to Dallas Theological Seminary professor Timothy Ralston, Mary's unwavering belief in Gabriel's message is confirmed by her prompt departure: "*Mary again demonstrates her confidence in God's word to her by immediately heading off to visit her relative. She intends to witness the sign that God has provided*"¹ (cf. Luke 1:36). As we learned from last week's sermon, the story of Advent is the ultimate demonstration of God's grace, and we find that divine grace is the keynote of the whole narration of this meeting between Elizabeth and Mary.

- When you experience big changes in your life, do you approach them with a heart of belief that trusts God? If not, where is your focus? What can you do to cultivate a heart like Mary's—of humble reliance on God's Word?

The crucial work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 41-42a)

At Mary's greeting to Elizabeth, John leaps, acknowledging the significance of the child in Mary's womb. Elizabeth, being filled with the Holy Spirit, experiences inexplicable joy as she both prophesies and blesses Mary. As one commentator states, Elizabeth feels "*a thrill over redemption.*"²

- What do you think was the significance for Mary to know that Elizabeth understood the importance of Mary's baby?
- Reread Gabriel's prophecy to Zechariah in Luke 1:14-15. How is the prophecy fulfilled during this meeting between Elizabeth and Mary?
- Read Luke 1:67-79 and 2:27-32. How is Elizabeth's response not only an enthusiastic welcome of Mary, but also a revelation of the Holy Spirit similar to that of Zechariah and Simeon?

The exuberant joy in God's grace (vv. 42b-45)

According to theologian and scholar Richard Bauckham, the convergence of these two mothers and their stories is central to Luke's account of the Incarnation.³ Exuberant with joy over God's gracious provision, "*Elizabeth, pregnant with the forerunner, recognizes the mother of the Messiah, 'the mother of my Lord,' and declares her blessed. Prompted by the child's leaping in her womb, she anticipates that child's relationship to Mary's child: John's role as the one who prepares for and proclaims the Messiah before the Messiah appears.*"⁴

- What is the significance of each blessing in Elizabeth's greeting to Mary (vv. 42-45)? How do the blessings Mary receives from Elizabeth differ from the messages that a pregnant Mary may have received from the people of Nazareth?
- How are we blessed as a result of Mary humbly following God and allowing her life to be shared with others?
- Luke 1:39-45 shows the Lord working through two women who would have experienced shame in their culture. Does this cause you to consider what God is doing through unlikely people today? How might this affect the way you think about people who are considered inferior in your community?

DATE: December 8, 2024

SPEAKER: Brian/Chad

SERIES: Advent

PASSAGE: Luke 1:39-45

RENEW: 31 Days of Prayer

DAY 14: The Fruit of the Spirit—Patience

PRAYER: Long-suffering Father, we praise you that you are slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness. You are graciously patient, not wanting anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance. In contrast to your perfect character, we are consumed with instant gratification and we confess that we despise waiting. We scramble to satisfy our own hearts with earthly things rather than waiting on you to satisfy us with your unfailing love. We grumble and complain when our plans are inconvenienced and our schedules are interrupted. Because of Christ alone, we ask that you would forgive us, and we thank you for your patience with us. Enable us, by your Spirit, to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Empower us to live like farmers who faithfully sow with patience and dependence while waiting and trusting you with the harvest that is to come. Give us wisdom to trust you when you say: "Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city." Make us into those who renew our strength because we wait for the Lord. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Child Evangelism Fellowship,
supported missionary partner

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Ruth and Keith Powlison, supported
missionary partners who have been
serving with MTW for 35 years

¹ Glahn, Sandra (editor). *Vindicating the Vixens: Revisiting Sexualized, Vilified, and Marginalized Women of the Bible*. 2017, Grand Rapids, MI. Kregel Publications. 108

² Davis, Dale Ralph. *Luke 1-13: The Year of the Lord's Favor*. 2021, Ross-Shire, Scotland. Christian Focus Publications. 32

^{3,4} Bauckham, Richard. *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels*. 2014, Grand Rapids, MI. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. 50-51