

The Power of Mercy

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[0 : 00] Did you say it's too warm in here, Crystal? Did you want fans on? Just a little bit. Oh, no, no, no.

Cold, we like to keep our worship fresh. But not frozen. Not the frozen chosen. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1.

Then we come to verse 39. Luke, as you know from our first few verses in this book, has written that we may have certainty.

That is his purpose. That is his goal. He wants us to have certainty. So he is recording all of these things with detail, with carefulness, so that we might know the whole truth, that we might have certainty.

He wants us to hear... You know, it's only Luke that tells us about these early events.

[1 : 17] The parents of John the Baptist. We only hear from Luke. This getting together of these two pregnant gals.

One very old and barren, but now pregnant, and one a virgin, and now pregnant. And how they dialogue about what's happening.

We get to see what they think, how they feel, what they believe. Luke is kind of pulling back the screen a little bit to help us see what all this is doing to them, and then how that then impacts us.

So let's read it, and then we'll pray, and we'll dig in. So I'm going to read from Luke 1, from verse 39 through 56.

So if you're able, please stand as we read from Scripture. Luke 1, verse 39. In those days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to a town in Judah.

[2 : 31] And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby in her womb leaped.

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 leaped in my womb for joy.

And blessed is she who believed that there would be fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. And Mary said, my soul magnifies the Lord.

My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. For he has looked on the humble state of his servant. For behold, now, from now on, all generations will call me blessed.

[3 : 53] For he who is mighty has done great things for me. And holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble state.

Humble state. He has filled the hungry with good things. And the rich, he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant, his child, Israel, in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his offspring forever.

And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home. So reads the word. Let us pray. Father, open these words to us that we might enter into what both Elizabeth and Mary are experiencing.

That we might see what they see. That we might know what they know. That we might feel what they feel. That we too might magnify you and rejoice in you.

[5 : 26] Help us to see what stirs them to exultation. That we too might see and feel and exult in you.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

What is it that we know about Mary? Young.

Young country girl. Living in a no-name place. Humble. So, so far, up to this point in the story, we just know that she's some country girl, lives in some no-name place.

It's got a name, but nobody really knows about it. Nazareth. Right? She's engaged or betrothed under legal contract of marriage.

[6:41] Right? And then she gets this appearance of an angel who tells her that she's going to conceive and have a son and call his name Jesus.

And this Jesus will be great and will be the son of the Most High and will reign on the throne of his father David forever.

How do you take all that in? She has been chosen by God to bear his son, to be the vessel through which the son of God, the eternal son of God might become incarnate, where the word becomes flesh.

Through her, he will get his flesh from her. What a supreme honor.

An enormous mercy. So what kind, so I got to think, what kind of person is Mary?

[7:51] You know, Luke gives us a whole lot that we wouldn't know otherwise. You know, what did she think of all this? How did she feel?

What did she believe about God? Was her belief in God superficial? Simplistic? Oh, I believe in a God of love.

We hear Mary herself tell us what she thinks, what she believes, how she feels. This is no simplistic gal.

This is a thinker. This is a biblical woman. Because what she says reflects psalm after psalm after psalm.

She is well-versed in the scriptures. So Luke writes these details about who Mary is so that we might have certainty.

[9:04] In other words, he's writing these things to have an impact on us. See, what do we think about these things? How do we feel about what Mary has heard and what Elizabeth now knows?

How do we feel about that? How do we, what do we think? What do we believe? And Mary talks about experiencing this mercy that is powerful, this mercy that is displayed with strength.

Such strength that it scatters the proud and brings down kings, but exalts the humble.

Such mercy. Do we know that mercy? And do we know the power of that mercy? Huh?

So here in Luke 1, Luke tells us the story of two unique mothers, both chosen, both pregnant. So I thought of titling this, you know, expectant mothers expecting Jesus.

[10:14] I don't know. That'll be clever. I read it by Dylannish. She said, no. Power of mercy.

That's what stands out. So remember that last time we saw this parallel that Luke intends for us to see. Luke has written a story about the announcement of John in chapter 1, verses 5 to 25.

The angel comes right to Zechariah while he's in the temple and tells him that he's going to have a son, that his old wife, or as Zechariah put it, she's not just old, she's advanced in age, right?

So she's really old, too old for a baby. So the announcement to John begins with Elizabeth, who's barren and old, and then it ends in 1, 24, 25, with Elizabeth who has conceived in her barrenness.

In the middle, the angel's word to Zechariah is that this son that you will have will be a great person.

[11:30] He will be a prophet of the Most High. He will be a forerunner before the Lord. So we have that. And then, right after that, Luke records for us the announcement of Jesus' birth, where the same angel, Gabriel, comes now to Mary.

So the story begins with Mary, who's a virgin, and the announcement ends with the angel going, and Mary, the virgin, has conceived. So we have a similar parallel there.

We again have both are troubled by the angel. Zechariah is troubled by the presence of the angel. Mary is troubled by the words of the angel.

Different. And then as the angel's word to Zechariah was that your son will be great, he'll be a prophet of the Most High, the word to Mary is that your son will be even greater because he will be a king who reigns forever, and he will be the son of the Most High.

So he lays both out in the same structure. I think that's fascinating. He wants us to see these parallels as well as the contrast.

[12:51] John is great. Jesus is even greater. So how do they think about all these things?

So here now he gives us, in verse 39 to 56, the response of these two women who are suddenly pregnant, who are not expected to be pregnant, who are not planning to be pregnant anytime soon.

At least Elizabeth had long given that up. Mary's thinking that's got to be down the line. I'm not married yet. Right? She's still in the patrol stage. As in her words, she does not know a man. So how can she be pregnant? Physically impossible. Right? So what are they thinking? How do they feel about all of this? Well, they have some very definitive thoughts.

And we hear, so he lets us hear from Elizabeth, and then he lets us hear from Mary. So we have two prophecies, really two prophetesses. Because what they do, and it's interesting.

[13:57] So Luke, who's the first voice, human voice we hear in Luke? Who speak and preach.

It's the voice of Elizabeth, and then the voice of Mary. First two preachers in the gospel of Luke. Who are really prophetesses. They're not prophet like predictive, but prophet like foretelling.

I mean, what Elizabeth says are things that you kind of go, how did she know that? How'd she know that? How'd she know that? Because all she heard from Mary was, hey, hello.

Whatever the greeting was. Hey, Lizzie. Mary. And then Mary.

Mary's is a psalm. It's a psalm. So, let's break this down. Let's look at the two.

[15:04] So we'll look at Elizabeth first. What does Elizabeth say? What does she think? What does she feel? She declares, let me summarize it this way, because what she says in verse 45 is her statement.

She declares that God blesses those who trust his promises. She says in verse 45, blessed is she who believed that there would be fulfillment of what was spoken to her.

She's blessing Mary. Blessed are you, Mary, because you have believed that there would be a fulfillment. In other words, you believe the promise. You believe that the promise will come true.

What the Lord told you. So she's declaring that God blesses, shows mercy to those who trust his promises, which he will fulfill.

So do you trust his promises? You trust that he will never leave you or forsake you? Do you trust that every difficult thing you go through is for good?

[16:10] Do you trust that if you turn everything over to him, the peace that passes understanding will flood your soul, will guard your heart? Do you believe that?

Or would you rather go on worrying? What do you believe? Do you believe his promise will be fulfilled?

So let's break this down. Elizabeth. So first we have the, we have cause and effect here.

So Mary comes in, gives a greeting, the baby leaps. When the baby leaps, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit. When Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, she proclaims these truths. When she proclaims all these truths, then Mary's moved.

Then Mary starts singing, preaching, declaring. Okay. So it's cause and effect. What starts it all was Mary's greeting.

[17:09] Just comes in and says, hail Elizabeth. I don't know how they said greetings back then. Blessings on you. Today we say, hey, how's it going?

What's up? What's up? What's up? How you doing? Fair to middling. All right. So we have a sign that's unexpected. In other words, the sign of the baby leaping.

We have this baby that leaps. When Mary comes in, she greets, at the greeting, the baby leaps.

Now I have no familiarity with, I have not lived with pregnant women.

Okay. Both of our children are adopted. So I have not been through the experience of pregnancy.

So I don't know. I understand that babies kick. They move. They poke.

But do they leap? Normally? Normally? Is this a normal experience? I have no idea. I'm asking. You had any babies leaping in your wombs, ladies?

[18:10] Anyways. Kicking, I understand. Movement, I understand. I've heard those things. I don't know what that's like. I have no idea. Maybe it's a little bit like kidney stones. I don't know.

I have no idea. Well, later. I don't know. But leaping, that's, you know, kicking, now you feel that, right? And I've heard, you know, ooh, he's kicking.

What's a leap? That's different. So it trips things off. Why does that happen? Why does that happen?

At the greeting. So here comes Mary, who by now we know clearly is, has conceived and has a baby in her womb. The other baby who we heard when the angel told Zechariah, this baby will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb.

Okay, so we have spirit work going on. So the baby's filled with the Spirit. When Elizabeth hears the word of Mary, the baby in her womb leaps.

[19 : 20] Sarah, what's going on there? Elizabeth clearly sees it as a sign. This baby leaping reminds us of the babies in Rachel's womb.

Remember the babies who, before they were born, were already fighting in the womb? Esau and Jacob, remember, they're already fighting. And Rachel prays to the Lord.

She says, what's going on? Right? I don't like this. What's going on? And the Lord says, it's a sign that these two babies are two nations. And the older will serve the younger.

And I've chosen the second one, not the first one. I'm picking heel grabber. Why?

Because God wants to do the way he wants to do it. I want the deceiver. I want to work on him. So we see a sign.

[20 : 20] So in other words, so now we have another struggle going on in the womb, but not a struggle of fighting, but a struggle of joy. So what's the significance of the leap?

The significance clarified by Elizabeth. She tells in verse 41. What we see, first of all, the baby leaps in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And then she exclaims with a loud voice.

I want you to notice that once she's filled with the Holy Spirit, she says a number of things that regular people wouldn't know are going on.

She knows a number of things only from hearing the greeting. She has not yet heard Mary's story. All she's heard is Mary say hello. Or good morning or good afternoon, whatever.

By the way, the travel from Nazareth to the hill, we don't know where this town is. It's so, so insignificant. We don't even have a name where Zechariah and Elizabeth live.

[21 : 19] The tradition says it's about six miles west of Jerusalem because Jerusalem is on a hill, Mount Zion. We in Colorado look at that mountain and say, that ain't no mountain.

That's like a hill. Well, anyway, so they call it a hill, right? And it's a hilly country around Jerusalem. So somewhere near Jerusalem, that's where they live.

So it's about 90 miles. So Mary gets in her car. In there in an hour and a half, right? Gets on her donkey.

Maybe she's humble of state. She probably doesn't have a donkey. She's probably walking it. And if she goes through Samaria, which most Jews don't, it's about three days.

But if you go around Samaria, which most Jews do, four days. So just a little detail. So she comes in Greece.

[22 : 20] So I want you to notice, what does Elizabeth know? Note that in verse 41, she's filled with the Holy Spirit. So she's under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Verse 42, then what does she say? Then she says, if I can find it in my new Bible, she exclaims with a loud voice, blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

Suddenly she knows, she makes a declaration, you are blessed. But she also knows that Mary's pregnant. How does she know that? How does she know?

There's fruit in her womb. Because Mary's a virgin and Mary's not married, but Elizabeth knows.

From the greeting, she knows. Not only knows, but she blesses it.

Blessed are you. You are blessed. And blessed be the fruit of your womb. The fruit of your womb.

Then she knows something else.

Verse 43, And then she says, why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? She heard the humility in her, the unworthiness in her.

[23 : 28] But what does she know? Not only that Mary's pregnant, but she knows who this child is. Who's this child? She knows it's her Lord. The mother of my Lord coming to me?

Surprise! Surprise! Surprise! Wow! The power of mercy humbles her.

She knows who the baby is. How does she know this? She explains in verse 44, For behold, she's telling Mary, Mary, behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

How did she know it was joy? She knew the baby leaped. How'd she know the baby's leaping for joy? How does she know the baby's knowing something's going on?

How is this pre-born baby making these, doing these things? don't we, in our society, kill pre-born babies who might be leaping for joy?

[24 : 47] Who may already be recognizing the Lord? Lord? This text, as we think about our society, we look back into this text, we see that Luke's describing how they thought about baby, pre-born babies, as not fetuses, but as persons.

as persons, with names already, not potential life forms, or whatever the language is today. I'm preaching to the choir here, aren't I? She knows who the baby, so she leaps for joy. Based on all this, she says in verse 45, blessed is she who has believed that there would be fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

How'd she know that? How'd she know that Mary heard from the Lord? How did she know that Mary believed what was spoken to her from the Lord, and that was spoken to her from the Lord, was about a fulfillment, a promise?

How did she know all of that? All Mary did was come in and say, how you doing, Liz? Whatever she said. Well, we saw in verse 41 that not only did the baby leap, which signaled to her something significant is going on because it's not a normal kick, not a normal movement, something big is happening.

[26 : 34] And then she's filled with the Holy Spirit. Ah, that's how she knew. She's filled with the Holy Spirit. Like a prophet of old, like a prophet who God inspires, she now knows things.

Interesting, you think there's two, two pre-borns in the room, right, there's two mothers, right, and things are happening. It's quite unusual.

Luke wants us to know the exact truth so that we might have certainty. This is how it happened. So, the bigger question than how did Elizabeth know all these things merely from a greeting, the bigger question is what is it that she's talking about that Mary believed?

What exactly was she referring to in verse 45 when she said she's believed, she, blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord?

What is it that Mary believed? What is it that Mary heard? Well, that's easy enough. We go back a few verses and look in verse 30 where the angel spoke to Mary and said, do not fear, Mary, you found favor with God and behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son.

[28 : 02] Okay? One, you'll bear a son. You should call his name Jesus. Okay? Verse 32, he will be great and will be called the son of the most high. Okay, getting a little bit different now.

He will be great and be called the son of the most high. People will recognize him as the real son of God. And the Lord will give to him the throne of his father David.

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom, therefore, will have no end.

Therefore, he's going to have a kingdom that's not like David. It'll far surpass David.

And then Mary asked the question, remember, how can this be? I'm a virgin. I don't know a man.

The angel said the Holy Spirit will come upon you. There's the Holy Spirit again. And the power of the most high will overshadow you.

That's how, that's how the baby will be produced in your virgin womb, the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the power that's overshadowing will do something else because the angel said, therefore, because of that, the child will be holy.

[29 : 13] So in other words, the how of the virgin birth is the power of the Holy Spirit. The why of the virgin birth is so that the child born is holy. Now Mary's not going to understand all the significance of this yet.

But Luke's writing so that we might have certainty. What kind of Savior do we have? Can he really save? So, what does Mary believe?

Well, let's go all the way back. Let's go all the way back to Genesis. Let's go back to the very first promise. You know what the very first promise in Scripture was? It was in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned.

When God came walking in the garden looking for them, right, where are you? As if God didn't know. Right, where are you? And they're hiding, right? Because now there's something that's happened.

They have broken fellowship with God. They have started to die in their spirit already. They're not dying in the flesh. Remember, God said, the day you eat the fruit, you will die.

[30 : 17] Something will dramatically change. And what changed was their relationship with God. Because now they're hiding from God. God seeks them out and God talks to them, what'd you do?

Did you eat the fruit who told you not to eat? The woman. And the woman says, the snake, the dragon, actually, the dragon.

Dragon, this is a serpent, right? Not a snake, this is a serpent that had legs. This is a dragon. So what does God say to the dragon?

Right? So here comes out of this what he says to the serpent. It comes, so the Lord God, Genesis 3, 14, 15, the Lord God said to the serpent, to the dragon, I will put enmity between you and the woman.

Who's the woman? Eve. And between your offspring and her offspring, he, referring to her offspring, shall bruise your head, serpent, shall crush your head, serpent, and you shall bruise his heel.

[31 : 33] You say, how's that a promise? That's a declaration of what will happen down the road. The direct line seed of Eve will crush the head of the dragon.

That dragon's going to trip him up. Dragon's going to bruise his heel. Dragon's going to cause his death, right? Going to work through Judas, going to work through the Sanhedrin, and the serpent is going to cause the death of Jesus.

But through Jesus' death and resurrection, what happens? Crushing the head of the serpent. Never saw it coming. Right?

Victory through death because now Satan has no hold on us. As we just sang, the chains are broken because he now has no claim on those who belong to that son of Eve.

Now, that promise kept going. It went on to Abraham. The physical offspring of Eve would conquer the serpent. Well, Mary would conceive a son.

[32 : 50] Her flesh and blood child would be from the line of Eve and Abraham. God said to Abraham, I will surely bless you. Genesis 22, I will surely bless you. So I multiply your offspring, literally your seed, as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.

And your offspring, your seed, shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your offspring, your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed my voice.

So the seed of Abraham. Remember, Abraham at this point had one son. One son. Who in Genesis 21 was told to go sacrifice him, go kill him.

Right? Abraham a babe, so God is blessing him. So we saw last time that this promise was on to David that a son from his body would be the physical heir.

Hang on a second, I'm stressing this for a reason. What did Mary believe about this son? Right? He's a direct heir from Eve and Abraham as well as David, 2 Samuel 7 12.

[34 : 07] Remember, we read this last week. God said to David, when your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring, your seed after you.

What do you mean by that? Who shall come from your body? We're talking about a physical descendant. a physical descendant from David, a physical seed from Eve, a physical seed from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all the way down to David, all the way down, and Luke will show us in chapter 3 that there is a direct line from Adam and Eve to Mary, a direct physical line, and there had to be, he had to be.

Why did Jesus take a physical body? Why couldn't Jesus just come and proclaim good news to us? Why couldn't he just come? Why did he have to be physically connected to Mary who's connected to David and all of the patriarchs all the way to Eve?

Why? Well, one, God said so. God said so. And God had a plan from the very beginning. He did not adapt that plan.

He did not change that plan. He kept unfolding the same plan. From the day that Adam and Eve sinned, there was a plan. Paul tells us, of course, that plan started way back before that.

[35 : 42] Why did God do it this way? Why was a body vital to the promise that Mary's counting on? Why was he born of a virgin? Why?

Well, the angel told us because therefore he's holy. He is set apart. He is unstained. He is unimpacted by the sin nature of Eve and David and Mary.

He will be the direct son of Mary but without her sin nature. So in essence, Jesus will become incarnate son in the same way that Adam and Eve originally were created perfect without sin.

Could you imagine being without a sin nature? How would we do? Would we do okay? Think we'd do better than Adam? So here's part two.

Here's Adam two. Adam the second, right? Jesus, he did it. And we're going to get into some stories later where Jesus is 12. It's like, oh yeah, he's kind of pushing his honoring mom there a little bit there a little later.

[36 : 56] He and mom are going to have some conflicts. Mary doesn't know this yet. But we're told that he was tempted in every way.

He was 12. He was two and three, toddler. Right? How do toddlers do with sin nature? They're always obedient and perfect, aren't they not?
Jesus went through that. Jesus was 12. How are 12-year-olds due? 13? 14? How do teenagers do? Right?

I know what I was. I was nowhere close. Especially as a latch key kid with lots of freedom. Oh, good.

by the grace of God. So he's holy. Why? Now Mary doesn't know this part yet.

[37 : 56] But he's born of a virgin and holy that he might offer himself as a real sacrifice for sins. See, Luke is writing that we might have certainty in the gospel that this Jesus who's born was a true savior who was holy.

Yes, he's king and reigning forever, we'll get to that later, but right now he is holy who was able then to take sin in his body on the cross. You see, if Jesus did not die in the flesh, if Jesus did not die a physical death as a real man, we don't have salvation.

salvation. If he was not fully man who had been tempted in every way and yet without sin, we have no salvation.

So Luke is writing to us that yes, Mary's believing, blessed is she who believes that God fulfills what he promised, right?

Mary believes. She doesn't understand all the implications of that yet. But it's there. So, Elizabeth tells us that God blesses those who trust his promises.

[39 : 15] what does Mary say? Mary says that God helps those who, I'm sorry, what? God helps those who what?

No, I heard something else. God helps those who what? Help themselves. What verse is that? That's in the Joel Osteen Bible.

God helps those who God doesn't help those who help themselves. Those who help themselves are on their own. I did not come for the rich. I did not come for those who are able.

I came for the poor. I came for the broken. I came for the sick. I came for those who can't help themselves. That's what Jesus said. You're good.

You're on your own. You don't need me. God doesn't help those who help themselves. God helps those.

[40 : 21] Mary says God helps those who fear him. His mercy is for those who fear him. He helps verse 54.

He has helped his servant or literally his child Israel in remembrance of his mercy. His mercy, his help is for those who fear him. That's the summary I believe of what Mary is saying.

God helps those who fear him and he helps them with the power of mercy. This is I believe what Mary tells us. Now what we have in verses 46 to 55 are a psalm.

It has three points. Verses 46 through 49, Mary's talking about her personal praise. what he has done for me she says. Then in verse 50 through 53 she talks about the power of mercy.

His mercy is for those who fear him. Then she's giving illustrations of that all the way through verse 53. Then in verse 54 and 55 she brings in God helps Israel.

[41 : 30] She ends her psalm. Now question. Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary. Did she compose this on the instant?

Did she write? I mean this is a beautiful psalm. Did she literally say these words just in this order? This beautiful psalm.

Now it reflects all kinds of other psalms. It reflects 1 Samuel 2 where Hannah, I mean it starts just like Hannah did when God gave Hannah a baby.

She couldn't have a baby. Right? Gave her Samuel. Right? So she said my soul magnified. Right? She said a lot of the same things Mary. But it's not a copy.

Did Mary compose this instantly? Was she that? I think she was very bright but was she that bright? Remember Luke is interviewing eyewitnesses.

[42 : 30] So by the time he comes to Mary and interviews her she's had lots of time to treasure and store this up. Right? But she's still reflecting what she accurately thought at that moment.

Okay? The composition might be much more refined by the time Luke gets her what she thought, what she said, what she believed. But the essence of what she says, that's what she believed.

Luke's recording the certainty. Okay? He's recording it accurately. So, here we have a beautiful composition of a real psalm, a hymn, a praise.

So it starts with personal praise. How does Mary feel? She says, my soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

She's moved by what Elizabeth has said. So here we have this chain reaction, right? We have the greeting, which leads to the baby leaping, which leads to the filling of Elizabeth, which leads to the declaration of Elizabeth, which now leads to Mary going, whoo-hoo!

[43 : 47] My soul magnifies the Lord. She's just been blessed by Elizabeth. And she's just been confirmed by Elizabeth.

Imagine that. What's Mary thinking? What's she feeling? She's all alone. Does Joseph even know yet? I don't know. She seems to have made this trip right away after the angel said, right?

Right? We read back in verse 39, she went in haste. So she heard the word, Elizabeth, your kinswoman, is pregnant, she who was called barren.

I'm going to go see Elizabeth. Probably right away. Okay? So she hears what Elizabeth says and Elizabeth is just backing up everything she's already said.

And Mary's got to be thinking, how'd she know that? How'd she know that? I haven't told her I'm pregnant yet. She already knows. I haven't told her who the baby is. She already knows. I haven't told her that I've accepted what the angel said, that I'm all in, that I'm a believer.

[44 : 54] I didn't understand how it's going to happen, but I'm all in. Not like Zachariah. I'm the Lord's bondservant, let it be.

So now, inspired by Elizabeth, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, now Mary is going to express what she feels.

My soul. What's your soul, by the way? My soul. Jesus says, love the Lord with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your strength.

Okay, wait, wait, wait. The original was, love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your ma'od, right?

Right? Jesus added mind, right? Because by the first century Greek thinkers, heart has turned into has been gotten mushy.

[45 : 56] Instead of, the Hebrew idea is the heart is the mind, right? He even talks about, he scatters the proud in the thoughts of their heart. Heart is the seat of thinking for the Jew.

So, her soul, her soul, her soul is where those deep emotions are. The soul is the one, remember David says, my soul thirsts for you.

And at the same time, my soul is cast down. So, the soul is where I can have my most elevated affections as well as my deepest pain.

That's my soul. Soul is where we get depressed. Okay? Our soul is where we get troubled. Okay? And she says, my soul is feeling good. How you doing?

Not fair to admit, my soul is magnifying the Lord today. That's what she says. My soul is filled. I want to magnify. So, how do I magnify the Lord?

[46 : 59] How do I do that? I get a magnifier and I make him look bigger and bigger and bigger. I'm enlarging. I want to make him look so large.

I want everybody to see how great my God is. And then she exalts in verse 40. What produces this exaltation? My spirit rejoices.

Rejoice isn't a strong enough word. It's exaltation. It's a supreme joy. It's the same joy that was described of the baby who leaped in the womb.

It's that kind of joy. Elizabeth said, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. That kind of exaltation. What produces that?

We'll look at what she says next, verse 48. For he has looked on the humble state of his servant. Who is Mary? What does she think about herself? I'm just a servant.

[47 : 55] I'm a nobody. Behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. That's not a boast. That's like, that's a stunned statement. Why?

For he who is mighty has done great things for me. For me. Who am I? She's stunned by the mercy. So her soul wants to magnify her.

Her spirit wants to just exalt in him. Why? Me. I'm in a humble state.

She's not saying she's humble. She said she lives in a humble state. She lives in a nowhere place. And she's a nowhere, no one girl. And then God changed everything.

That's what she's, it's stunned by mercy. That's what causes exaltation. Have you been stunned by mercy lately? You've been stunned by mercy, right?

[49 : 05] You've experienced the power of mercy, right? That's how you came to Christ. trust. Have you experienced that lately? Maybe haven't thought about it.

God. So what does Mary think? That's how she feels. What does she think? Verse 50. Now she's going to proclaim, she's going to declare truth.

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. In other words, that's the way it's always been and that's the way it will always be. His mercy will always be for those who fear him.

He does not help those who help themselves. He helps those who can't help themselves. Why do people fear him? What's fear?

What does that mean to fear him? And let's not water it down to, oh, it means to have awe. Of course it means to have awe, but it's much bigger than that.

[50 : 07] Right? When Jesus calmed the sea, what was the response of the disciples? The writer of the gospel said, they feared him.

And they said, who is this? That's fear. Hey. Forgot to turn my volume down. Sorry.

Someone's trying to get my attention. I don't know what's going on. I changed my notification on my phone to be this hey. because I get these other notifications, and I would miss it.

And then I'd be like, oh, I'm almost late for men. Right? So I changed it to hey, and I had the volume all the way up. So the first time it went, I'm like, right?

I'm sitting in my nice little office, and all of a sudden I hear this, hey! And I realized the phone was like, oh, it's time for men. So, sorry, I usually mean to turn my volume down, and now it's created this whole disturbance.

[51 : 16] Smooth, Bill, smooth. All right, so what does she think? She thinks about this mercy that's powerful. Who receives this mercy? Who receives God's mercy?

Mary says it's for those who fear Him. What does it mean to fear Him? What does it mean to fear Him? It's those who know Him as He deserves to be known.

It's those who regard Him and not disregard Him. See, it's those that she talks about later here in verse 52. It's not the mighty who are strong enough and don't need God.

It's those who are humble estate, those who are exalted. Verse 53, it's the hungry. He's filled the hungry. He shows mercy to the hungry. Why? Because the hungry are needy.

Those who fear Him are those who know they need Him in one sense. Okay? And by contrast, what she writes about, He has scattered the proud.

[52 : 27] Do the proud fear God? No. All they think about is themselves. What about He brought down the mighty from their thrones?

Why? Did they fear God? No. They will. Right? So the rich don't fear God. Not typical rich don't fear God because they got all they need.

They don't need God. They don't need His mercy. mercy. They don't even want His mercy. I got where I am on my own. Right?

I, no, God didn't help me. I got where I am on my own. Really? Really? You caused your birth? You caused your skills? You caused your mind to work the way it works?

You caused the gifts that, you caused all that, did you? Really? Well, no, but I did all the effort. Did you? So you created all the situations that made you successful.

[53 : 26] You made all that happen. The economy is going up when you got rich, huh? You caused that, huh? Right?

What is it to fear God? See, He scatters those that don't fear Him. He topples those that don't fear Him.

He sends them away empty, ultimately, who don't fear Him. Is that because He's vengeful? No. Because He deserves to be feared.

He deserves to be recognized. The Psalms talk about those who fear Him are also those that God delights in. And God enjoys those who fear Him.

Fear Him is not about cowering before Him. It's simply just a right recognition of who He is. And if I disregard Him, that means I don't fear Him.

[54 : 36] I don't think He has any impact in my life. but those who fear Him recognize He is God Almighty. He has given me everything that I have.

I owe Him everything. There are consequences for how I relate to God. Period. And if I don't see it yet, I will see it.

God's not in a rush to, you know, Psalm 103 talks about, He said, the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him.

So same thing. Steadfast love, that's His mercy. That's the Old Testament word for, there's no one word to translate, chesed. It's, sorry, I'm going to spit on the front row here.

It's big, it means steadfast, it's the, it's, I forget how the New American Standard does it, it's the, they make up a phrase for this word.

[55 : 38] It's love, kindness, mercy, grace, it's all that. So the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him. That's almost exactly what Mary says. Mary says His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

It's almost the same, almost the same words. And His righteousness to children's children. To those, so who are those who fear Him? It's also those who keep His covenant and remember to do His commandments.

Those who fear Him, why do they keep His commandments and keep His covenant and remember His commandments? Why do they do that? It's the obedience of faith. They do that because it's good for them.

They do it because they love the Lord. Which is another way of saying, they fear the Lord. Okay. So how does He display His mercy?

Verse 51. What kind of, how does mercy come? How does mercy come? He says, He has shown His strength with His arm. Mercy comes with strength.

[56 : 47] Mercy comes with power. See, because I think Mary's thinking back to the Israelites coming out of Egypt because that's when the Scripture talks about God showing His arm. He showed His arm to who?

Egypt. specifically, who in Egypt did He show His arm to? Pharaoh. Are you going to harden your heart? Okay, yeah, do that. Do it again.

Do it again because I can't wait. I'm going to show my power. And my power is not just about toppling you, it's about mercy for my people and bringing them out of slavery.

That's His arm. That's mercy. He shows His mercy with strength. He has scattered, how does He do it? By scattering the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

Not scattering the proud physically, but scattering them in the thoughts of their hearts. That's an interesting phrase. Right? Proud, I don't need God, I'm all about me, it's, I'm good, I'm okay.

[57 : 53] And at some point God's going to scatter their thoughts. He's going to just blow their mind. I don't know what that looks like.

He's brought down the mighty from their thrones. He's brought Pharaoh down, he's brought Saul down, he's brought Nebuchadnezzar down, who else has he brought? He's brought down every king there is. He's going to bring our nation down.

Because they've become proud. And arrogant. And mighty. Instead of humble. And God dependent.

Right? I'm not talking about all of America, I know there's your America too, and you believe and trust God. But the majority of America does not.

Could give a rip. God will bring that down. the clock is ticking. Every nation has a time clock on them.

[58 : 56] Right? How long did Babylon last? How long did Egypt last? I know Egypt's back, but not the original. How long did Greece last?

How long did Rome last? Right? We understand. God. Remember the whole reason, the delay between Abraham and the promised land?

Remember that? God told Abraham 400 years, four generations, then I'm going to bring your people back. Why can't I bring them in now? Because the people there have a time clock running. And they still got 400 years.

But at the end of that, their time's up and then you're going in and crushing them. That's how God works. Right? Right? What's our time at? How long have we been around?

About 400 yet. Do we get 400? I don't know that we get 400. Looks like it's coming faster than that. At least, alright, didn't mean to get into that.

[60 : 06] He's brought down the mighty from their thrones. He's exalted the humble. He's filled the hungry with good things. Interesting. He filled the hungry with good things. Not just food. He filled the hungry with good things.

That means they're not just hungering for food, they're hungering for good things. Jesus said, blessed are those who hunger for righteousness. Why do they hunger for righteousness? Because they don't have it. Remember the beatitudes? Blessed are those of the poor in spirit, those who can't, those who know they can't fix themselves. Blessed are those who mourn, who mourn because they know they can't fix themselves. blessed are those who are meek. Why are they meek? Because they've been broken and they're mourning and they're meek. And then what happens? Then they get hungry. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness because they don't have anything like that. They want to have that real righteousness. I mean, not this kind of what I can do in my own strength kind of stuff that's all mixed with impure motives and my own strength. [61:12] See, he fills the hungry with good things. And the rich he sent away empty. So then what does she believe in verse 54?

Now she brings it down home to Israel. Started with herself and talked about how God's mercy is powerful. Now she talks about a promise that's remembered. He has helped Israel, 54. He has helped his servant Israel. I don't know why they translate servant because the word is child. He helped his child Israel. The children of Israel, right? He helped his child Israel in remembrance of his mercy. There's mercy again. We had it in verse 50. Now we have it in verse 54. Kind of bracketing this whole thing. What mercy is that? 55. As he spoke to our fathers. Which fathers? To Abraham and to his offspring forever. Oh. He helps Israel according in remembrance of his mercy that he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring. [62:22] So what is that? By the way, when he talks about when Mary's saying he helps Israel, what's Mary's view of Israel and the Messiah?

What does she expect the Messiah to be? Right? What does she expect this Messiah to be? Well, she's told he's going to be king, right? Does she expect him to die for sin? No. So I want you to know Luke is not Christianizing Mary's thoughts here. Okay? At this point in Mary's life, she is still, she believes everything a good Jew would believe. We believe in the promises of Abraham and the descendants. We believe in a Messiah that's going to come and he's going to sit on David's throne. And every Jew believed that was a physical throne on Jerusalem in the palace in Jerusalem. So that he could rule forever those 90 square miles of earth. Right? The promised land. Because the promised land only goes, you know, partway to, you know, down the Sinai and then a little bit toward Babylon but not all the way and up, you know, so it's just about 90 square miles. [63:37] I don't know what the mileage is. But it's a fraction of the earth. Is that what we believe? Is that what we believe? Jesus has come to just, to just bring back the promised land?

That's it? Because that's not what he told David. He told David forever. Forever. Eternal. That gives us a hint that it's not an earthly thing. That it's not a limited thing. In fact, Jesus said, my kingdom's not of this realm. I'm a much bigger king than that. And dude, if, yeah, never mind. Pilate, what I could do to you? If I just asked. Are you a king? You better believe I'm a king. I'm the king of kings and the king of all, end of all kings. I decide when you reign and when you don't reign. I decide how long you reign. And I'm slowly putting my enemies under my feet. Until the last enemy is under. [64:47] But Mary didn't have that concept. Mary does know the promises, though. Please see this. She knows the promises. She knows scripture. She has studied. She has pondered.

She has treasured the scriptures. She knows. She's speaking of it. He's helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever. She knows what those promises are. So what are those promises? Well, they go back to Genesis. We already read Genesis 3. They promised to Eve. There's a promise to Abraham, Genesis 12. God said to Abraham, I'll make you a great nation. Remember this? Remember a few months ago we went through the, how do we understand the Old Testament? What are the promises? Remember, it's all built on Abraham. What did God promise Abraham? I'll make you a great nation. Right? I will give you land and I will bless every family on earth through your descendant. Three great promises.

[65 : 46] Right? Come to David. It's all there. We got the land. We got the king. Right? We got the nation. And now, now we have to do outreach.

I mean, I don't know if David was thinking about that yet. We're going to bless all the families here. Are we thinking about outreach yet? How come Israel never thought about outreach? He never did. Solomon comes along. People start coming to him, but interesting. So he says to Abraham, right? I'll bless you. I'll bless. I will bless you and make your name great so that you'll be a blessing. I'll bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

Come to Genesis 26. He says the same thing to Abraham's son, Isaac. He says to Isaac, sojourn in the land and I will be with you and bless you. For to you and to your offspring, to your seed, I will give all these lands.

[66 : 47] I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham, your father. So I told him I'm going to do it. Now I'm telling you. I will establish the oath I swore to Abraham, your father.

I will multiply your offspring, your seed as the stars of the heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring, here we go again.

In your seed, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Same thing to Jacob, Genesis 30, Genesis 28. Behold, the Lord stood above and said, I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, your father and the God of Isaac.

The land, here's the land again, the land on which you lie, I will give to you and your offspring, your seed. Your seed will be like the dust of the earth and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east, to the north, to the south of where he's laying.

And in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. There it is again. In your seed, all the families of the earth will be blessed. What's that mean?

[67 : 54] Blessed how? He's not just blessing Abraham, but he's blessing all the families of the earth. He's going to bless all the nations of the earth. In other words, it's not just Jews, but Gentiles.

That was God's intention from the beginning. How did the Jewish nation do with that? Not so well. Not so good at outreach, were they?

Not so good at blessing all the families. They're really good at blessing themselves. And if you come to us, then we'll bless you. We ain't going to you. Were they told to go to them?

Huh? Were they told? Huh? Hmm. So what is this blessing? What does it mean to bless all the families of the earth?

Thankfully, we have a New Testament verse that tells us. Well, several verses, but Paul interprets this promise to Abraham that the offspring that he was speaking of all the way through is Christ.

[68 : 56] When he kept saying, in your seed, in your seed, in your offspring, in your offspring, he was speaking about Christ. Here's what Paul says in Galatians 3. He says, now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring, his seed.

Now watch what Paul says. It does not say, and to offsprings, referring to many, but referring to one, and to your offspring, who is Christ.

Guys, Paul, come on, Paul. Really, you're going to make an argument based on singular and plural. Really? One letter. Really? One letter. You're going to make an argument based on one letter that's there or not there.

Yeah, absolutely. Because every word matters. And the way God said it matters, especially when he said it over and over and over and over, always in the one offspring.

One offspring of Eve. One offspring of Eve. One offspring from Abraham and from Isaac and from Jacob. And then we already read from David too, from your body, right?

[70 : 07] One. One seed. One seed. One seed. Who's the seed? All the way through. Who's that scarlet thread that goes all the way from Eve all the way to Mary?

Christ. Christ. And how is he going to bless? What does that mean? Galatians 3 talks about Christ redeems us from the curse of the law.

How does he bless us? He blesses us by saving us from sin. He doesn't bless us by making us rich. He doesn't bless us by giving us our best life now. He blesses us by saving us from sin.

And he brings us into his family where we will suffer just like he did. We will go through trials just like he did. We will not have our best life here. We will have our worst life here.

Doesn't mean things won't be good. We have peace that passes understanding. We are blessed.

We can exult. We can rejoice. We can magnify. It doesn't mean it's horrible, but there are things we

go through that are not, what does he say in Hebrews?

[71 : 19] Not joyful. Right? But rather painful. Because that's how we become more like Jesus.

And our father is more about making making us like Jesus than making us like we want to be.

Because that doesn't help anybody.

Especially ourselves. So, God helps those who fear him.

who can't help themselves. And he helps them with powerful mercy. And he does that through one offspring that has come through Mary by taking our sin.

And his mercy is toward those who fear him. Who are humble, broken, hungry, meek, pure in heart, persecuted.

[72 : 22] So, God helps those who fear him. Who seek him, listen to him.

Who intentionally orient their life to him. Who don't ignore him, don't dismiss him. Don't disregard him. But intentionally orient their life toward him every day.

day. Not in cowering fear, but so that we might magnify him and experience the power of his mercy.

Because his mercy comes to those who fear him.

Yeah. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for these words that Luke records for us of Elizabeth and Mary. May we feel and think and believe like they did.

May we grasp. They weren't all the way there yet. They didn't grasp all the truth yet, Lord. But we aren't all the way there either. So, help us each time we grasp the truth to respond.

[73 : 36] With joy. With awe. With stunned exultation. Open our eyes, O God. Bring your mercy to those in humble estate.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen.