

Sunday October 9, 2022 Thanksgiving Sunday
Luke 1:26-80 Series Wk 2

Last week we began an orderly account of the good news and we were introduced to a faithful, elderly couple Zechariah and Elizabeth.

They harkened us back to Abraham and Sarah, they are promised a child, named John. He will be great, and he will be like the prophet Elijah.

This morning a new character walks on the stage, a young, Jewish peasant girl, engaged to a man named Joseph of the house of David, her name was Mary.

Why does Luke mention the house of David? Because the long awaited Messiah, the hope and fulfillment of the scriptures, the Bible, is that a new king would come who would be from the line of David.

Gabriel, the messenger sent from God, was sent to Nazareth, maost unlikely place, to a most unlikely young woman with a message from God.

Mary, like Zechariah and Elizabeth, had found favour with God.

Vs 28 “Greetings, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!”

In the Scriptures, the Hebrew Bible, kings would inquire if the Lord was with them, for if God was with them, then the battle would be won.

An angel, appeared to Gideon and said to him: And ^(N)the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, ^(Q)“The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.”

In the book of the prophets, the day of hope, the day of restoration was described like this:

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. (Zephaniah)

Thus says the Lord of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”
(Zachariah)

“Greetings favored one. The Lord is with you.”

Vs 31 Mary is told that she is going to have a son. You shall call his name Jesus.

Joshua/which means “God saves”

Vs 32 And this son, Jesus, will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Jesus is the fulfillment of the scriptures.

And this fulfillment, the fate of the world, rested on the response of a teenage girl.

First God’s messenger goes to a couple who are too old, and then he goes a girl who is too young.

Vs 37 But with God nothing will be impossible.

The fate of the world awaits Mary’s response:

Vs 38 “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

The sign for Mary that all this was from God was that her cousin Elizabeth expecting a child.

Mary immediately went to see Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry:

Vs 42 “Blessed are you among women, and bless is the fruit of your womb!

And as Elizabeth’s song finishes, Mary bursts into song saying;

Vs 47 “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

Vs 49 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 estate;”

When did God do all those things???

In Israel’s history.

With these words, Mary links her story, the story of Jesus’ birth, to Israel’s epic history.

We already are starting to see that God’s work is going to be unexpected.

Elizabeth, the older woman blesses, blesses the young virgin for her faith, and for the child she is carrying.

In the past, in the days of Abraham and Sarah, when there were two women with children Sarah bearing Isaac and Hagar bearing Ishmael, there was jealousy and pain.

But here in this day Elizabeth greets Mary with joy, John leaps in the womb at the sound of Mary's voice, and God is praised by both these women.

The Holy Spirit who brought order out of chaos in creation is at work reordering the world and ushering in the new day of God.

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for 3 months and then returned home.

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.

And when everyone asked his name, they expected him to be named after his father, but Elizabeth said his name was to be John, and Zechariah wrote; "His name is John"

And his suddenly his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and his first words were blessing to God.

The neighbours wondered;

Vs 66 What then will this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him.

Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, recounts God's mighty deeds and situates John and his story in the midst of Israel's epic story.

God has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, (vs 69)

God remembers his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, (vs 73)

Vs 76 And you, child, will be call the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways...

Vs 78 Whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Mary's song, Zechariah's song, Luke recording all of this proclaims God's faithfulness, God's promises, and that God is fulfilling his promises.

The light of the new sunrise is about to dawn on the world.

While it is still dark, the songs are beginning.

This Thanksgiving weekend we are encouraged to pause and give thanks for food, family, friends, but also the faithfulness of God, the promises of God, that our stories are part of God's epic story.

God is with us.

Nothing is impossible for God.

God's kingdom is being established in our midst, and will come to its fulness.

It's right for all of us to burst into songs and poems, to lift our voices and join the praise.

WE are God's partners in this work.

That's what it means to be part of the church.

So as we are giving thanks to God, as we are rejoicing in God's faithfulness, I invite to think deeply about Mary's words;

I am the Lord's servant, let it be to me according to your word.