



DATE: December 13, 2009

TEXT: Luke 1: 39-56

TITLE: "Mary's Song"

We are continuing in this Christmas season to look at the book of Luke. Last week and this week we are looking at Mary, the mother of Jesus and see the lessons she has to teach us about Christian living.

Last week we looked at what is called the Annunciation. This week we are looking at what is called in Latin "the Magnificat." Literally this means "glorifies". It is one of the most beautiful pieces of prose ever written. It is a daily prayer for Catholics called the "Hail Mary" and it is a weekly vesper song for the Episcopal Church. This morning I will share three lessons from our text.

Lesson # 1 Mary knew of the importance of seeking support and fellowship from another person of God. Last week we saw the cost of obedience as we looked at Mary. Mary was blessed. She had received a miraculous conception. The problem was no one, including Joseph believed her. God sent her to the one person who would understand the idea of a miraculous conception... her

relative Elizabeth. Elizabeth as soon as she saw Mary broke forth in words of praise and support.

Imagine the feelings of Mary... "Oh thank you Lord... finally someone who believes me supports me and loves me... oh thank you Lord."

The application to our lives is this. We too need fellow believers to support and love us. Non-Christians can not give that support and understanding. *1 Corinthians 2: 12-14* gives us this truth...

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God...This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but by words taught us by the Holy Spirit. The man without the Holy Spirit does not accept the things that come from God, for (these truths) are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them.

We see the truth of this scripture almost constantly as we speak to non-Christians. I was speaking a little while ago to a person and the small talk turned to T.V. The person asked "Do you watch South Park."? I said no and was going to move on in conversation but the person asked, "well why not it's a great show." I answered in a non-condemning way that for me as Christian I did not feel it was good to put that show in my mind. I did not say it was wrong for all Christians it was wrong but for me it is wrong. I could tell that this person did not really understand what I was saying. This person used, as the text in Corinthians said, human wisdom and could not understand that human wisdom is not the same as Spiritual truth. We as Christians understand. We know that

Colossians 3:2 states "**set your minds on things above not on earthly things.**" We can share and support each other when the world fails to understand and even laughs at us.

In my very first church, I was right out of Seminary we had a problem with the organist. She was 80 years old and her skills were seriously deteriorating. We had the Choir director who came and asked if we would fire her. I knew that this woman dependant upon the small stipend that we paid her. I knew she loved playing the organ. I talked to an acquaintance before the session meeting. He was a musician... but he was not a Christian. His advice was very simple.... "if she is not doing a good job then you have to fire her immediately." The Session of my church met 3 times to talk about this. Finally, after much debate we decided that we could not fire her immediately. Her welfare was too important. We decided to give her a six month notice, have a major party for her with a opportunity to give her a gift that would cover 2 to 3 years of her salary. The non-Christian did not understand the decision... "why not fire her immediately." Truthfully the Choir Director did not understand the decision and quit. The session decided that this woman had to be ministered to.

I am sure we have all experienced the difficulty of talking about subjects such as World

hunger, marriage, homosexuality, abortion and I could go on and on because non-Christians use "human wisdom" we use the Word of God as our source of truth.

We need each other. The Lord has given us the Church. We have a place to come to share in fellowship and love and support with fellow Christians. We need a sharing community. My hope and prayer is that, that is what this church is for you. Yes a place to worship, but also a place to share and love and laugh and cry and experience the fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ. We need to be the Elizabeth's in the Body of Christ.

Lesson # 2 Note in our text the great humility of Elizabeth. From our text *verse 42-45*

In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

Elizabeth humbly recognized that her child was secondary to Mary's child. This is very difficult. It has been my experience that parents of new babies or unborn babies believe their child is the most beautiful, greatest child in the world. There are many beautiful kids and grand kids of people in this church but I know Alex and Luke are the most beautiful. I read this story this week

On the first day of school little Johnny approached the teachers desk and handed the teacher a note from his mother. She opened it up and read it..."Dear Teacher, At times Johnny may be disobedient. When this happens go to him and spank the child sitting right next to him. This will cause him to be afraid and he will be obedient."

Elizabeth was humble. She subordinated her interest to the glory of God. It is so easy to be proud. I know it is for me. Proud of our children. Proud of accomplishments. Proud of our wealth. Proud of our faith. Let us follow the example of Elizabeth... let us be humble praising God for the blessing He has given us. Let us subordinate our interests to the glory of God.

Lesson # 3 Note that while the central theme of our text is praise the secondary theme is

God's protection and exultation of the poor. *READ verse 51-53*

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

I'll be honest, I get uncomfortable when I read in scripture about the Christian responsibility to the poor. I am uncomfortable when I watch the evening news shows and see the hunger and disease in the world. I am uncomfortable when I go on Mission Trips and see very poor people who have

one and only ne goal in life... to eat that day. It would be so much easier to close my eyes and pretend that is not real. But as a Christian I need to open my eyes and respond in love. William Barclay in his commentary on this text states this

A non-Christian society is an acquisition society where each man is out to amass as much as he can get. A Christian society is a society where no man dare to have too much while others have too little, where every man must get, only to give away.

I do not believe Scripture teaches that money and wealth are in and of themselves are sinful. Our Lord teaches that placing our wealth over our faith is sinful. Jesus teaches in Matthew 19 that it is very difficult for the wealthy to place Christ first in their lives. Money is powerful and lures us into it's worship. We are responsible for the staving people of Somalia and Afghanistan. We are responsible for the homeless refugees in the Sudan. We are responsible for the hunger in our own area. One common complaint that is often heard is the statement "all the church ever does is ask for money." Let me say that is not true.... we as a church ask for far more than just money... in the name of Christ we ask for a persons life... and yes we ask for that constantly. Let a persons money follow a persons soul and life.

We have seen our text teach us that we need each other we need fellowship and support. We have seen the need for humility. To subordinate our interests to the glory of God. Finally we have seen that part of that love must extend to the hurting people in our area and in the world.

Finally **Lesson # 4** Note Mary's spontaneity of praise. *Read verse 46-49*

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name.

Upon the greeting of Elizabeth, Mary did not say "Oh, yes I am indeed going to be a great woman."

No, she praised God. Her song is based almost completely on the old Testament. There are 20 old testament quotes in her song mostly from Hanna's song in 1 Samuel 2. Mary knew her bible. It was memorized. It was part of her life. And her naturally reaction was to praise God.

God has richly blessed us. We are wealthy. We are healthy. We have the ability to openly worship and share our faith. Sharing Christianity openly and without cost is possible in a minority of the world. It is illegal in every Muslim country. It is illegal in China. It is still illegal in Russia. You must be part of a registered church. We are blessed. Are we first and foremost praising of God? Do we praise Him above all else because we are blessed so very much? Do we daily praise

our Lord?

We have seen the lessons from Mary. We have seen

1. The need to have a group of Christians who we can share our life with. A support team. A family of believers.
2. We have seen the humility of Elizabeth. She glorified God over herself and even over her family.
3. We have seen God's special concern for and protection of the poor.
4. We have seen the need to praise God naturally. We are greatly blessed... we need to greatly praise God.

AMEN