

Luke 1:39-56

**“God Makes the Impossible, Possible”
Fourth Sunday in Advent (C)**

December 22, 2024

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, West Salem, Wisc.
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

“In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth” (Luke 1:39-40).

From the impossible, God makes the possible. Mary and her relative Elizabeth never expected to bear children. Mary was a virgin. Elizabeth was barren. So, from a virgin and a barren womb, God brings forth living, leaping children. So, from out of nothing, God works everything.

Before their meeting, the angel Gabriel came to Mary to announce the conception of Jesus. Mary asked how this conception could take place, since she was a virgin, but through it all, she displays true faith in Gabriel’s promise. Excited by this unexpected news, she went with haste to visit her relative Elizabeth.

Now, the initial conversation between Mary and Elizabeth is unknown to us. Did Mary blurt out the news of her pregnancy? We don’t know. But there is something we do know. For it appears that it was the baby in the former barren womb of Elizabeth who leaps knowing the Savior is near. But wait, there’s more! Just as John leapt, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said, ***“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?”*** (Luke 1:41-43).

Elizabeth not only knew that Mary was pregnant, but the Holy Spirit revealed to her that that baby in Mary’s womb is the promised Messiah. And not only that, Elizabeth declares that Mary is also blessed!

Mary is truly blessed, but she is not blessed by who she is. She is blessed because of her humility as God’s servant. She is blessed as the Mother of God who will bear her Savior and Elizabeth’s Savior and our Savior. For like us, she is also a sinful human being who was in need of a Savior.

Like Mary, we, too, are blessed. We are blessed not because of who we are. For if we were treated the way we deserve, we justly deserve God's present and eternal punishment. So, our blessedness is not measured in the things we have. Our blessedness consists only in Emmanuel, God in the flesh. Jesus is the ultimate source of every true blessing. Jesus entered Mary's womb via the Holy Spirit so that He could die on the cross. And through His death, He took away the sin that had separated us from God, and reconciled us back into God's presence.

The world we live in is barren. We long for peace and brotherhood in this fallen world. We long for togetherness. We long for those good memories of times' past. But when we open our eyes, we often only see barrenness. Love has grown cold. We see violence, selfish ambition, arrogance, sinful perversion, conflict and ignorance. And we see this every day looking right at us in our own bathroom mirror.

But there is joy leaping from a barren womb.

What a visit Mary and Elizabeth must have had! Today, we also have the joy of standing and praising God together with a loud voice. Today, we will hear loud voices from our Sunday School kids. Today, we will join their loud voices through song. And today, we get to visit with Jesus just as truly as He came in Zechariah's living room and just as hidden.

Later, we will commune with Christ. What a joy that is! This joy of forgiveness, life, and salvation is something we ought to share with our neighbors, family and friends!

For God has taken flesh in the womb of a virgin. In Christ alone, every barrenness must give way to fruitfulness and joy! Every time you hear Christ's Word and partake of the Sacrament, Christ is present just as surely as He was with Elizabeth and John.

Through the Holy Spirit, we respond in faith to the continued proclamation that our Lord Jesus, who took on human flesh and dwelt among us, is our promised redemption and salvation. ***"For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"*** (Isaiah 9:6). Amen.

*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.*

+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +