



LUKE

Luke 1:39-80 - "Songs of Praise"

OBSERVE & REFLECT

(This section is designed to encourage us to reflect on and observe the scripture and weekend sermon.)

READ Luke 1:39-80

- ☀ Read the text at least twice. Try reading the text from two different translations.
- ☀ What do you observe in the text? What jumps out at you and grabs your attention? What questions do you have from the text? Pay attention to any action words or phrases and observe what the implications are.

INVESTIGATE & APPLY

(This section focuses on what the scripture has to say as we dig deeper into the Word. It is oriented to create discussion on the Scripture.)

Open: What would make you celebrate wildly, without inhibition, right now?

1. Read v. 39-56. Two cousins, an old woman and an unmarried young woman, meet for the first time after each has become pregnant. In such a setting, what emotions would you expect to spring up between them?
2. What is surprising about the way that actually respond to each other?
3. Mary's song is one of the most famous songs in Christianity. What causes Mary to launch into a song like this? What characteristics of God does Mary's song highlight?
4. Read v. 57-80. What do we learn about the person of Zechariah from this section? How does Zachariah's song weave together the political and spiritual?
5. What similarities and differences do you see between Mary's song and Zechariah's?

Zechariah's own 9 months of silence suddenly broken at the naming of the child is a reflection on a smaller scale of what was going on in Israel of his day. Prophecy, many believed, had been silent for a long time. Now, it was going to burst out again, to lead many back to a true allegiance to their God. What had begun as a punishment for Zechariah's lack of faith now turns into a new sort of sign, a sign that God is doing a new thing.

-NT Wright

NEXT STEPS

- ☀ What are the wrongs to be righted, the changes in society that you long for which may seem to massive and difficult to do anything about? What sections or words from Mary's song resonate with you own heart and life right now, and provide hope and encouragement?
- ☀ In what ways even small ones, can you be involved in this work that God desires in his world?
- ☀ Luke's first chapter holds together what we often find easier to keep separate. How does this first chapter display a concern for both the larger perspective of God's purpose in history and the lives of ordinary people?
- ☀ Spend some time in prayer:
 - Using Mary's Magnificat as a guide, give praise to God using the very words of Scripture to inform your prayers. Inject your personal prayers of praise.
 - Pray also for the major problems of oppression, hunger, greed and violence around the world.

Luke 1:39-80

[39] In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, [40] and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. [41] And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, [42] and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! [43] And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? [44] For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. [45] And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

[46] And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,

[47] and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

[48] for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

[49] for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

[50] And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

[51] He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

[52] he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

[53] he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

[54] He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

[55] as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

[56] And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

[57] Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. [58] And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. [59] And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, [60] but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." [61] And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." [62] And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. [63] And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. [64] And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. [65] And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, [66] and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

[67] And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

[68] "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people

[69] and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,

[70] as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

[71] that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;

[72] to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,

[73] the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us

[74] that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

[75] in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

[76] And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

[77] to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,

[78] because of the tender mercy of our God,

whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

[79] to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace."

[80] And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.