

Luke 1:39-56—Choosing Joy

- I. Scene: Mary journeys from Nazareth in Galilee to a town in the hill country of Judah, about 80-100 miles away- 3 days journey to visit her relative Elizabeth.
- II. The Recipients of God's Grace
 - a. Mary—young virgin; lower class (c.f. *Luke 2:24* & *Leviticus 12:8*); betrothed to a carpenter
 - b. Elizabeth— in the line of Aaron; husband a priest (higher status); yet old and barren
 - c. Both experience God's grace in miraculous birth.
- III. Elizabeth's Humble Joy (true joy requires humility)
 - a. Baby in the womb responds to Mary's arrival
 - i. Theological contrast to Jacob and Esau's fighting in the womb (*Gen. 25:22-26*)
 - b. Honored to be in the presence of Mary
 - i. No sense of jealousy or comparison
 - ii. She rejoices in God's grace in Mary's life
- IV. Mary's Response—Magnifies the Lord (Magnificat)—Joy comes from being God-focused
 - a. Compare with Hannah's prayer (*2 Samuel 2:1-10*) regarding birth of her son Samuel
 - b. Vv. 47-49: mindful of God's work in her life
 - i. Notice the shift in tenses: she sees God's grace in the past, present, and future
 - c. Good example of praise: mixture of what God has done for her and who God is (His character)
 - d. Vv. 50-55: mindful of God's work in humanity
 - e. V. 50: inclusiveness beyond Israel; not about one's birth right but a willingness to fear (revere) God
- V. Joy involves a longing with a patient belief that God will act
 - a. Mary (like so many of her people) expressed patient belief, and yet a longing for God to intervene with the great injustices of her day (from the cruelties of Herod the Great who had the backing of Roman might)
- VI. So what?
 - a. May we be mindful and find joy in what God is doing in our lives
 - b. May we be mindful and find joy in how God is blessing others, without becoming jealous
 - c. May we be mindful and find joy in how God is working in history
 - d. May we be mindful and find joy and hope in God's certain promises of perfect justice