

Luke 1 (Part 2): 26-56 • Mary's Song of Praise

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Luke chapter 1. We are in our second installment of this chapter, and we are picking it up in the 26th verse. Luke 1:26. It's appropriate to the season. It says, *“In the sixth month, (and that means the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, remember we talked about that last week), the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.”* (ESV)

Lots of names given to us here, in these first couple of verses. We got Gabriel, we've got Mary, we've got Joseph, and of course they make reference to the house of David. It says here that Mary and Joseph were betrothed, and I need to just explain to you just very quickly about Jewish betrothal, because it's very similar, well, it's somewhat similar to our engagement period that we have here in our country. But there were some very significant differences.

For starters, you ready? People could be betrothed at the age of two! You got this good-looking little baby boy, and your neighbor has this good-looking little baby girl, and the parents get together, and they say, hey, I think our baby boy wants to marry your baby girl. I mean, someday, and not now, but someday. And so, they could be betrothed as early as age two. That's pretty different.

Here's the really interesting thing. After the betrothal, and there was a ceremony involved in a betrothal, but after a betrothal, they will refer to as husband and wife. Can you imagine a four-year-old going, that's my wife playing over there, or I think my husband just ate that frog, or something dumb like that.

The betrothal period usually lasted one year and to break it required a divorce. So that's different from our engagement period. Furthermore, if a man died while betrothed, but before getting actually married, his wife would be considered his widow, interestingly enough. So, these things usually took about a year to play out before the wedding ceremony. And we know here, from this passage, that Joseph and Mary were in that one-year, usually one-year betrothal period if they were betrothed as adults. And, it tells us here that, during that time, Gabriel came to visit Mary.

Look at verse 28, “*And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”*”²⁹ *But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.*” In other words, she wanted to know what the purpose of the visit was, and who can blame her? If you had an angel show up in your bedroom, you'd probably go, “what are you doing here? Right? I mean, that's the most natural thing in the world. And so, she's wondering what this is all about.

Verse 30, “*And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*”³¹ *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name (Yehoshua) Jesus.*” I know that's not the name that's written in your Bible, but that was the Hebrew name that the angel would have spoken to Mary. You and I know it better as Joshua, very common name, by the way, even then. The Greek form of course, being Jesus, but we're told a lot more than just about the fact that there's a baby to be born. The fact is, the angel said, “*...you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,*”

And what we learn from that is a confirmation of the real humanity of this One who is being given from the Lord to be, as what we know to be, our Savior. We understand here that He is, and will be born in that sense, as a complete and total human. And that is significant, by the way, because we know, you and I know, that He is going to come represent us. He's going to identify with us as He begins His ministry, and that's what His water baptism was all about: identifying with sinful man.

And then He's going to, having identified with us, He's going to represent us on the cross. He's going to say, I willingly represent all of mankind! Well, guess what? Only a man can do that, only a human being can do that. So, you see, to understand the humanity of the Son of God is vitally important, as it relates to understanding our salvation and His representation of us on the cross, we see that.

Verse 32, the angel goes on and says, “*He will be great...*” and that of course refers to both His person and His mission. By the way, no one, hands down, has influenced human history more than the man, Jesus Christ. No one! He goes on to say, “*...(He) will be called the Son of the Most High.*” And that'll be His unique identity, “*...the son of the Most High (God).*” “*...the son of the Most High (God).*” Make no mistake, there's a clear declaration of His deity.

Now, the angel goes on and says, “*And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,*” and this is a clear indication that this One who is to be

born will be the Messiah, as he refers to Him as having the throne of His father David.

Verse 33, *“and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”* So here he differentiates the coming One to be born from all the other kings of the earth, they all come and go. He says, this King and His kingdom will have no end. What a glorious thing.

Verse 34, and Mary responds here, *“And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”* Now, there’ve been a lot of people over the years who've looked at Mary's question alongside Zachariah's question, which we dealt with last week. Because, you remember Zachariah asked a question too of the angel, and you remember what happened. He didn't talk for nine months as a result.

He was made mute because he responded to the angel and said, how's this going to happen? My wife is well past childbearing years, and you say she's going to have a baby. Remember what happened? Gabriel starts off by saying, I am Gabriel, which means, you're in the doghouse, buddy. I stand in the presence of God, and because you've not believed my word, you're not going to be able to speak until this baby is born. (Luke 1:18-20)

What is it that made Zachariah's statement one of doubt and Mary's not? Because Mary's not rebuked for what she asks here. Mary simply wants to know the process. She understands, knowing that she herself is a virgin, knowing how children are born in the natural way, she's simply inquiring how's this going to happen. There's no doubt here, she believes. And we're going to see later when she goes to visit Elizabeth, Elizabeth is going, through the Holy Spirit, speak of Mary's faith and willingness to accept the message of the angel. But that is the difference.

Just asking questions isn't a problem, when we're standing before God. It's whether we're... it's what's in our heart and what generates those questions. Is it doubt? Or is it simple inquiry? I'm curious, how's this going to work?

And so, she asked this question and the angel's response is in verse 35. He says, *“And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy (set apart) —the Son of God.”*

What do we see here in this verse, verse 35? Well, we see that the conception is going to be miraculous. There's no need for any physical, anything here. You

and I know how babies come about, but this has nothing to do with that. This conception is going to be miraculous, contrary to nature, a work of the Holy Spirit.

By the way, Luke doesn't record it for us here in his gospel account, but we read elsewhere, particularly in the Book of Matthew, that Joseph also received a revelation related to the impending birth of Jesus. And even Joseph was told ahead of time, what he was to name the child as well. And obviously, that revelation that came to Joseph was very necessary because when he learned that Mary was pregnant, he certainly would have been hurt. They're in their betrothal period, this is that time before a husband and wife come together and consummate the relationship, and here she turns up pregnant.

And so, he had nothing to assume except that she had been unfaithful. And frankly, Joseph had the right to press the issue, related to Mary's indiscretion, or at least what he perceived would have been an indiscretion. And he had the right to insist that she be punished for this sort of a thing. And that's why the Lord came to Joseph. It's actually recorded in Matthew chapter one. Let me put it on the screen for you. Goes like this,

Matthew 1:19-21 (ESV)

...her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

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And that is what Joshua, Jesus, Yehoshua means. Jehovah is salvation, and that's why the name was given to Him in that way.

And the angel continues speaking to Mary, and gives her some rather exciting news, verse 36 and 37, "And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is (in fact) the sixth month with her who was

called barren. ³⁷ *For nothing will be impossible with God.*” Amen? Hey, that's one of those verses, man. Oh, man. Nothing is impossible, right? Nothing will be impossible with God.

Mary is given the news that Elizabeth, her relative, has conceived and is well into her pregnancy. Here's Mary's response, verse 38. You have to love this, *“And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.”*

Stop there, please. We read this every Christmas and we're well aware of the words and how they go, and most of us could recite them without looking at the page. But I don't think we stop long enough to really consider the implication, and the impact, and the power of these words from a young girl who was probably about 16 years old, and who had received this visitation from an angel. Which is enough to blow your socks off right there.

And then to receive the news that the Holy Spirit is going to come upon her in such a way as to create this conception, in her womb, of this holy child who will be called the Son of the Most High God. And there are, no doubt, a great deal of questions that this young girl has about this, and she only asks one of them. The rest of them she basically leaves to God.

How is Joseph going to be told about this? At this point, she doesn't know. We already read about it, but that's going to happen later. How is her family going to respond when they find out that she's with child? She's in her period of betrothal. What are they going to say? What are they going to do? Is her life going to be in danger because of this in some way, shape, or form?

But instead of insisting upon answers, which you and I often do when we are facing the unknown, Mary simply says, *“let it be to me according to your word.”* And what we're talking here, guys, is faith. Faith. We get so whacked out about faith and so twisted around.

Listen, faith isn't knowing what will happen. Faith is choosing to trust God when you have no idea what He's up to or how it's all going to play out. That's faith. It's choosing to say, I trust you. May it be to me according to your will. May it be to me according to your will.

That's hard, isn't it? That's challenging. May it be to me according to your will. But that was the faith that this 16-year-old girl had, which absolutely blows me away. When I was 16, I don't even want to go there. But I am so impressed with

the godliness and the patience, and the insightfulness of this young girl to trust the Lord.

Goes on here in verse 39, and it says, *“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 (I like leapt) in her womb (I’m one of those weird word people. Anyway,). 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!””*

And, when she says, *“the fruit of your womb,”* that would lead us to believe that by the time Mary gets there to the house of Elizabeth and Zechariah, that she was already now pregnant. That the Christ child was already, probably, in her womb.

Either way, Luke is preparing us for what Elizabeth is saying here, and by telling us in verse 41 that she was filled with the Holy Spirit. And that says something significant to you and I. It says that what she is saying now is by the work of the Holy Spirit, she's speaking by the Spirit. And that's why the Bible always prepares you and I for what someone's about to say by saying, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Then it'll say, he or she said, right? That's telling you that this is by the inspiration of the Spirit, okay?

Now, some of you might be a little confused when you read this passage about the fact that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And the reason that might cause confusion in some people is because, you may recall, in some of our past studies, that I have made it very clear that no one received the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit prior to Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection. And I stand by that.

People were not indwelt by the Spirit prior to Jesus giving the Spirit, as we read about at the end of John's gospel account, when Jesus appeared to them on resurrection night, breathed on them and said, *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”* Okay? (John 20:22) That's when the Holy Spirit came in. Jesus actually told His disciples, the Spirit who is now with you and will be in you.

But the, in, of the Holy Spirit had not yet happened, and yet, we read right here that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And I understand that language can be a little confusing. But you need to understand that the terminology, filled with the Holy Spirit, is consistent throughout Scripture as referring to the work of the Holy Spirit to empower a believer, supernaturally, sometimes to

prophesy, sometimes to act on behalf of the Lord, or whatever the case might be.

But please understand that being filled with the Holy Spirit is not the same thing as being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The language can be confusing, but again, when you look in the scriptures at, filled with the Holy Spirit, you're going to find that happened in the Old Testament. The Spirit came upon people and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, but they were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit in the same way that you and I are post-resurrection or all believers post-resurrection. So, you need to understand that.

Filling is always connected with power to do, right? We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit once when we come to faith in Jesus Christ. We are filled with the Holy Spirit repeatedly, and we see that in the scriptures. Let me show you just from the book of Acts on the screen here, I'll give you four examples:

Acts 2:4

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 4:8

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!"

Acts 4:31

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 13:9

Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said,

It says, "*All of them (the believers) were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*" (Acts 2:4)

By the way, that's a reference to the very first filling of the Holy Spirit upon the assembled believers. But they'd already received the indwelling presence of God on resurrection night.

Now, "*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!"*" (Acts 4:8)

Then he goes on to make a speech. But Luke wants you to know that he had been filled again with the Holy Spirit, and that's what moved him to speak.

And then, Acts 4:31, “*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*” Acts 4:31 is referring to the same group of people that were in Acts 2! And so, they were filled again with the Holy Spirit.

And then, Acts 13:9 talking about Paul, “*Then Saul, who was also called Paul filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said,*” And that's telling you that he was empowered by the Spirit to say what he did. You'll remember what he said to Elymas was, you're going to go blind buddy.

Right? You remember that? Power of the Lord. So, we see this happening repeatedly over and over. And here, Acts 13:9, where Paul speaks to this man named Elymas, do you remember when Paul was first filled with the Holy Spirit? It was when that man came and laid hands on him, right? And said, Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me to lay hands on you, that you might be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 9:17)

But Acts 13:9 is talking about a new filling. The Greek language suggests this is new, this is fresh, okay? So again, you need to understand that, filled with the Holy Spirit, refers to empowering from God to do. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit coming in to reside, to take up residence, happens once when you get saved. You are born-again through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. You are empowered when the Holy Spirit comes upon, and that is referred to the filling of the Holy Spirit.

All right, Elizabeth goes on. Look at verse 43 with me, and says, “*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 (leapt) for joy.*⁴⁵ *And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.*”

Did you hear what Elizabeth said? That last statement she said? “*...blessed is she who believed...*” See, that tells us that Mary did not doubt when she asked her question. She believed.

And Elizabeth is speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit because she wasn't there. She wasn't there when Gabriel came and gave the message to her, right? But now Elizabeth, by the Holy Spirit, says “*...blessed is she who has believed...*”, so forth.

Now, as we get into verse 46, we're going to hear Mary begin to speak. And this section is referred to as Mary's Song, which is also known by its Latin name of,

The Magnificat. And, by the way, Luke is very unique in his inclusion of these songs. We call them songs, although they didn't sing them, but we refer to them as songs because they're these beautiful, faith-filled declarations of God's faithfulness.

They're full of praise and insight, and so forth. And Mary begins to speak here. And you're going to hear some other songs as well. We're going to get into Zachariah's song next week. And then we're going to see Simeon's song, which is called The Benedictus, (Correction Song of Simeon) which we'll get into when they take the baby Jesus in to be named and circumcised.

But Mary begins here in verse 46, and it says, *“And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior,”* What a wonderful thing to say when someone has been so blessed. It's not about her. Mary doesn't put the emphasis on her.

She says, *“My soul magnifies the Lord,”* He is the One who is magnified. I am a vessel. Right? I, yes, I've been chosen to be the Lord's vessel for this wonderful privilege and honor, but I magnify the Lord.

Look at verse 48. *“for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;”* I want to stop there for just a moment. There, because there's some important things that Mary says here that are going to help you to understand some things about this baby that she's carrying.

Did you notice in verse 47 that she said *“my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior,”*? Did you catch that? *“my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior,”* Let me ask you a question, how many saviors are there? That's a rhetorical question, by the way, but I want you to think about it. How many saviors are there? Well, it's a trick question because there's an answer actually given to us in the Book of Isaiah. Let me show you Isaiah chapter 43 on the screen, here. And verse 11, it says,

Isaiah 43:11 (ESV)

I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.

I, I am the LORD (I am YAHWEH), and besides me, there is no savior.”

Okay, so we're just going to establish this right now, okay? How many saviors are there? There's One. And we can see that clearly from the Scripture. There's

only One Savior. Now, what's interesting about that is, you take that verse and, by the way, the Bible never contradicts itself, right?

I love when people say, well, the Bible's full of all kinds of contradictions. And I say, name one. Well...you know... They don't know any. It's just a fun thing to say to deflect the conviction they're under.

Anyway, you and I know what the Bible says. Besides the Lord, besides Yahweh, there is no Savior. I'm going to prove to you that Jesus is God with the next verse I'm going to show you. It's going to be in the next chapter of Luke, Luke chapter 2. The angels come to the shepherds, right?

Luke 2:11 (ESV)

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Now, understanding as you and I do that the Bible doesn't have any contradictions. Understanding as you and I do that Isaiah declares the voice of the Lord saying, *“I, I am the LORD, and besides (apart) from me, there is no savior.”*

We see now that, when the angels make that declaration, unto you is born this day a Savior. We know who He is. He is Jehovah God made flesh. He is the Son of God. He is the eternal, almighty, immortal God made flesh. And there's no doubt about it. And it's just as clear as can be.

And, I want you to know, one more interesting thing about this, about her statement. She refers, Mary, refers to Him as *“...God, my Savior,”* Did you notice that Mary made that personal? She didn't just say God, the Savior, she could have said that, but she said, *“...God, my Savior.”* And that's very important because, and I am not throwing stones, people, please understand me.

But, within the context of Roman Catholicism, you probably know, some of you because you have a background in it, some of you because you just know, there is a dogma, which is in the Roman Catholic Church, called the Immaculate Conception, which states that Mary, was kept free from the pollution or the stain of original sin and, therefore, needed no savior.

And yet Mary refers here, in this beautiful statement, this beautiful song, she praises “...*God, my Savior.*” In other words, “the One who saves me. The One who saves me.” That's one of the most beautiful lyrics in that song *Mary, Did You Know?* You guys are probably aware of it. Mark, what's his name? Who wrote it...Lowry. Mark Lowry wrote that song, beautiful line, this child that you deliver will soon deliver you. Beautiful, beautiful statement, but Mary needed a savior.

That doesn't take anything away from her favored status. That doesn't take anything away from her beauty, her heart, her faith, and how we honor her, but she was a human being. And, as a human being, was born into sin like you and I are born into sin. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests that Mary was born sinless. Nothing. And it's important that you and I know that. Not that we would argue with our Catholic friends, but that we would simply know the truth, right?

I mean Mary was an extraordinary woman. And in fact, she even says herself, “...*all generations will call me blessed;*” And we do, we're still doing it today, right? But there are things that Mary is not. For starters, Mary is not the mother of God. God has no mother. Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Mary is not a mediator on our behalf. And there is nothing in the Word of God, not one single word about that. In fact, quite the opposite. Let me show you 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 5,

1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV)

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, (and that is) the man, Christ Jesus,”

And, by the way, this verse not only speaks against the mediation of Mary, but it speaks against the mediation of any priest who would say, if you're going to confess your sins, you've got to do it through me.

There is only one mediator, people, according to the scriptures. There's only one and that mediator is Jesus Christ. And finally, Mary is not someone to whom we pray. Over, and over, and over again Jesus tells you to pray to your heavenly Father. When He taught us to pray, He started off by saying, “*Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name.*” (Matthew 6:9)

We are never, ever in the scriptures told to pray to Mary, or anyone other than God Himself. And again, I'm not throwing stones, you guys. But we need to get

the truth out there, right? We need to know the truth, and it's not so that we would be haughty or so that we would look down our nose at people and say, I can't believe the junk you, people, believe.

Listen, I'll tell you something. The people who have been raised in Roman Catholicism and who come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ make some of the most beautiful Christians I've ever seen in my life. There is such a surrendered-ness to their life. And I don't know why that is. I really don't know.

All I know is that, throughout the years, I have watched as people who have come out of Roman Catholicism and there's something about their heart. They come to know Jesus and understand that it is by Jesus, and Jesus alone, that they are saved. It's not through the Eucharist, it's not through confession, it's not through attending mass. It's just Jesus Christ. And they are just blown away with joy and tenderheartedness toward the Lord.

If you have some Catholic individuals in your life, just pray and ask the Lord to give you an opportunity to share the love of Jesus and just talk about the beauty of the grace of God that saves us apart from works. And just let the Lord do the rest in their hearts, right?

Okay. Mary continues in verse 49, she says, *“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.”*

This is beautiful, beautiful declaration praising the Lord for what He is going to do for others through her. Mary is just blown away at how God has privileged her to be this wonderful vessel of the Lord. But we also learn a great deal from this song about the character of God. Notice that she says His name is holy, which means, set apart, unlike any other name.

And then she reminds us in verse 50, I love this. Look at verse 50 again. She said, *“his mercy is for those who fear him...”* Do you need the mercy of God? Me too. Every day. But it says here *“his mercy is for those who fear him...”* What does that mean? Well, I think the best description of fearing God is given to us in Hebrews chapter 12.

Let me put it on the screen. It looks like this,

Hebrews 12:28-29 (ESV)

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

That is one of the most beautiful descriptions of what it is to fear the Lord; to offer up sacrifices with reverence and awe. Because the fear of the Lord is very different between a believer and an unbeliever, right? With an unbeliever, the fear of the Lord is truly a fearful, terrifying idea that they will be forever separated from Him. But for you and I, the fear of the Lord is on reverence toward Him. And Mary says in her statement that mercy is for those who have that.

And then she speaks of other aspects of His character in verse 51. She says, “*He has shown strength with his arm...scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts, (people who just think that they know everything) he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;*” Notice, bringing down, exalting.

Verse 53, “*he has filled the hungry with good things, (What's the opposite?) And the rich he has sent away empty.*” You see the opposite there. And what we see in this is an expression of God's character. How God supports and exalts the humble and those who have little, even if, ...I'm not saying that if you're a rich person which, by the way, according to international standards, world standards, we are all rich people in this room, okay? You are wealthy.

I'm not saying that God's mercy can't reach people who have because, the whole idea of humility, recognizing that I lack, is one of the heart. Do you know what I mean?

As Jesus said in the beatitudes, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit,*” (Matthew 5:2) In other words, blessed are those who are destitute of themselves for theirs is the kingdom of God. It doesn't matter how much money you have. He's talking here, or Mary is talking about the kind of wealth that produces a prideful attitude toward God that says, I don't need You, okay?

But for those who humble themselves, they are lifted up by the Lord. And this is one of the things we see throughout the Word.

And then finally, in verse 54, she says, *“He has helped his servant Israel,”* Now she's thinking about the child that is coming forth from her womb, the promised Messiah. And she rejoices over the fact that God has remembered His promise. In fact, she goes on to say, *“in remembrance of his mercy,”* at the end of verse 54, *“as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”*

And so, she rejoices in the fact that God has kept His promise. And Christians, do you know today that God always keeps His promises? There is never...there will not be one promise at the end of time in which God has not kept. There will not be one single promise of God that has fallen to the ground, unanswered or unfulfilled.

God will fulfill everything that He said He would fulfill. You and I can take that to the bank. And then the section ends very simply, here in verse 56, by saying that *“(And) Mary remained with her about three months,”* and we assume that she stayed with Elizabeth until the time that John was born. And then it says, *“(she) returned to her home.”*

And so, next week we're going to cover the birth of John the Baptist, and Zachariah's song. You're going to love next week, let me tell you, because here's a man who's been thinking about what he wants to say for nine months.

And when the Lord opens His mouth, out of that mouth is going to come some of the most beautiful praise and prophecy about the son that has been born to him and his wife in their old age. And it's a lovely song and we're going to cover it next week. So, let's stand together right now, please. We're going to close in prayer.

Let me remind you that our prayer teams are going to be down front here and they're available to pray with you. But, please understand, if they're busy, grab somebody who's sitting, standing next to you, whatever. If you need prayer today, don't leave without getting prayer and just understand that, as believers, we all have equal access before God, okay?

There's nobody here in this room who has special access to the Throne of Grace. We all, through the blood of Jesus Christ, have the freedom to enter freely into His presence and to come before the Throne of Grace. And anyone who is a born-again believer in Jesus has that access and has the attention and the heart of the Father. So, just know that, going into that time of prayer, okay?

Father, thank You so much. Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for Your grace. Thank You for Your power. Jesus, as we read these words, as we read about these beautiful statements at the declaration from the angel to Mary that she would conceive a child, and her response, and then Elizabeth's beautiful statement of praise when Mary arrives in her home, to Mary's lovely song of praise and declaration of God's character.

What beautiful things we see. What insightful things we learn about who You are and what You've done and what You will do. How faithful You are, how glorious is Your splendor. Lord God, as we go into 2019, help us to take this heart of faith in with us to speak with the kind of faith that Mary spoke with.

May it be unto me, Lord, according to Your will. May our lives reflect You. May we be a glory to You in this coming year. May we be Your humble vessels, who shared the love of Jesus with those with whom we come in contact. We thank You for Your love, Your grace, and Your power through Jesus Christ, our Savior and King, amen.