

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Our Scripture selection for today follows upon near where we left off in Luke's Gospel last week. Recall that in the past two sermon texts we pondered the angel Gabriel's miraculous messages to Zacharias and Mary. We observed that Zacharias' wife Elisabeth would give birth to a son in her old age—a son who would be named John and was the forerunner of the Christ. We also saw that a virgin named Mary would conceive in her womb by the power of the Holy Ghost and would bring forth a son who was to be named Jesus – meaning Savior – and He would be the Son of God. Yes, Jesus is true God and true man but one Christ, as foretold of old.

In Luke 1:36-38, just prior to our Scripture selection for today, we read that the angel Gabriel told Mary, "behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."

Note well that Mary had no doubts about what the angel told her. Therefore, as we ponder our sermon text for today, we shall consider the fact:

"MARY AND ELISABETH WERE WOMEN OF TRUE FAITH"

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) How Mary showed she was a woman of true faith
- 2) How Elisabeth showed she was a woman of true faith
- 3) How Mary confessed her true faith

Verses 39 & 40, ----- (Luke 1:39-40)

Just prior to our text we learn the angel Gabriel informed Mary that her cousin Elisabeth was six months with child. Elisabeth had been barren and was advanced in years past when women can normally get pregnant. Did Mary doubt the words the angel spoke to her concerning her cousin? No, for our text informs us: *Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.*

Indeed, Mary believed the words spoken to her by the holy angel Gabriel who had been sent by God. Mary did not stand there questioning the angel concerning the miracle of Elisabeth carrying a child or the miracle that she – Mary herself – a virgin, would bring forth a son. Thus, Mary showed she was a woman of true faith.

It is wonderful that both Mary and Elisabeth were happy to become mothers. It is sad that many women today despise becoming mothers, while instead they kill their babies by means of the murderous practice of abortion. Human life is snuffed out because many modern-day women and men simply desire to fornicate for their own selfish fleshly pleasures. Nevertheless, Jesus says in Matthew 19:18, "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery." And, God's Word in Hebrews 13:4 clearly states, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Accordingly, repentance is surely required throughout our nation and the rest of the world.

Looking at the first two verses of our text, we note that Mary quickly went to visit Elisabeth in the home of her and her husband Zacharias— a house that was located in a city of Judah. Interestingly, the city of Hebron in the hill country of Judah was that of the priests, as we learn from Joshua 21:11; and, if that was the city in which Zacharias' house was located, Mary traveled some 70 miles to visit

her cousin Elisabeth. So, Mary's actions showed she was a woman of true faith.

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As we ponder the next few verses of our text, let us see how Elisabeth showed she was a woman of true faith.

Verses 41 & 42, ----- (Luke 1:41-42)

Think about what happened when Elisabeth heard Mary's greeting, for the baby John leaped in Elisabeth's womb. God the Holy Ghost filled Elisabeth and she subsequently confessed that Mary was blessed, and that the fruit of Mary's womb – the child Jesus – was blessed. Thus, Elisabeth was surely a woman of true faith, for she had faith in the promised Messiah, the Savior, Jesus Christ, who would be born of the Virgin Mary.

Jesus is, according to Romans 9:5, the "Christ" who "came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Jesus is therefore deserving of worship since He is not only true man but also true God, for although Jesus is the fruit of Mary's womb He is also the man who was conceived by God the Holy Ghost.

Verses 43 & 44, ----- (Luke 1:43-44)

Observe that Elisabeth's faith was PERSONAL faith in Jesus Christ as her Savior and Lord, for she said: *whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.*

Indeed, Elisabeth knew Jesus Christ, the God/man, as her personal Savior and Lord. Elisabeth showed she was a woman of true faith by the confession she made concerning Jesus being her Lord.

Furthermore, the unborn baby John, was also gifted with faith in the Lord Jesus, for he leaped in his mother's womb for joy at the news of the

coming birth of his Savior. Yes, the unborn was not simply a fetal blob-of-flesh; the unborn baby John was a person, a human being with God-given faith in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord.

My friends, faith that saves ALWAYS has JESUS CHRIST as its OBJECT; and, faith that saves ALWAYS is GOD-GIVEN and personal, for Holy Writ declares: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (John 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 12:3) Therefore, let each and every one of us cling to Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord.

Verse 45, ----- (Luke 1:45)

Notice Elisabeth also showed she was a woman of true faith by reassuring Mary that the things told her from the Lord would indeed come to pass. So, Elisabeth testified of the certainty of God's Word and encouraged Mary in her faith in the Lord. Accordingly, Elisabeth showed she was a woman of true faith.

People with true faith, sincere faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord, believe God's Word is 100% truth. People with true faith know and believe, "the holy scriptures... are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

— as 2 Timothy 3:15-17 relates. People with true faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord believe what He said when He prayed to God the Father for His followers, saying, as John 17:17 reports, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” Yes, people with true faith in Jesus Christ do NOT doubt God’s Word but rather accept it for the total truth that it is.

Elisabeth showed she was a woman of true faith when she assured Mary that there would be *a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord*. Yes, Elisabeth knew that when God says something is going to happen it most certainly will happen. It’s as Numbers 23:19 clearly states, where we read, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”

Fellow Christians, God’s promises are sure and certain; let us take comfort in that fact. We are all sinners who need the Savior, Jesus Christ, “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not,” declares Ecclesiastes 7:20. Romans 6:23 adds, “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Therefore, I repeat, we are all sinners who need the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let us therefore sincerely repent of our sins and cling to Jesus Christ in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord, for, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (1 John 1:9; John 3:36) Let us have true faith as did Mary and Elisabeth.

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see how Mary confessed her true faith.

Verses 46 & 47, ----- (Luke 1:46-47)

With these verses begins a very special and personal confession of faith by Mary. We will examine the beautiful confession made by Mary the woman of true faith.

It’s sad that an entire church-body idolizes and worships Mary rather than simply admiring her as a very gifted Christian woman who was truly a humble believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to whom she was privileged to give birth.

Mary’s faith in Christ was from the depth of her soul. Note well that Mary magnified the LORD her GOD and SAVIOR! Mary never magnified herself, for she knew she was a sinner who needed the Savior and she therefore rejoiced in HIM. Mary had personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, her God and Savior. God grant that we all have and continue to have faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord.

Verse 48, ----- (Luke 1:48)

Mary reflected her true faith as she continued in her confession, for again we see that Mary was a humble believer, a lowly humble virgin who knew she was unworthy to be chosen to bear the Christ child, the Savior of the world. And yet, she knew she was the Lord’s handmaiden, a servant of the true God, for she was a believer in the true God. Mary knew that from that time forward all generations would call her blessed since God greatly blessed her when He chose her to be the mother of the Christ— Jesus the Savior of the world.

Fellow Christians, we certainly do call Mary BLESSED of the Lord since she was highly privileged to be the mother of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We do NOT call Mary the mediatrix because she is not, for 1 Timothy 2:5-6 plainly states, “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

Verse 49, ----- (Luke 1:49)

Mary said of the Lord God, "holy is His name." Mary did NOT say, "holy is my name; everyone is to worship me and worship statues and paintings of me." Mary would be appalled at such sinful idolatrous behavior as is perpetrated by the Roman church to this very day. Mary knew the truth as stated in 1 Samuel 2:2, "There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."

Mary acknowledged that the mighty God had done to her great things— that's things, plural. Think about it. The almighty God had gifted Mary with faith in her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The almighty God, the Holy Ghost, had conceived the babe that she would give birth to; the Holy Ghost had prevented Mary's sin from being passed on to the baby Jesus, for Hebrews 7:26-27 states concerning Christ Jesus, "such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Jesus is the holy, sinless, only begotten Son of God! Jesus the baby grew up fulfilling God's Law perfectly for us and then He paid for our lack of fulfilling God's Law: Jesus shed His holy and precious blood while nailed to the tree of the cross, thereby paying for all the sins of all people.

Verse 50, ----- (Luke 1:50)

Mary also confessed that the Lord is a God of mercy, and His mercy is especially upon His believers for all time. Only unbelievers obstinately reject God's mercy shown in Christ our Lord; and consequently, the unbelievers forfeit the forgiveness of sins and salvation which Jesus actually has earned for all people, which is why Mark 16:16 declares, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Fellow Christians, let us never forget that God's mercy continues upon us as He keeps us in the

faith, for Lamentations 3:22 informs us, "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

Verses 51-53, ----- (Luke 1:51-53)

Mary knew and confessed that God the Father showed strength with His arm, that is, with the sending of His only begotten Son into the world to be born in time of the Virgin Mary, for we read in Isaiah 53:1-6, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Those who are filled with self-pride and their own so-called might are put down by the Lord God, for we read in Psalm 49:6-12, "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish."

Thus, the Lord God has indeed *put down the*

mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. Yes, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are filled when God gifts them with faith in Christ, for those with sincere faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord have the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to them, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe,” as Romans 3:22 states. But, those rich in their high self-esteem as they trust in their own so-called good works are sent empty away without the forgiveness of sins and salvation, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” declares Galatians 3:10.

Hence, Mary confessed her true faith by acknowledging God’s marvelous mercy, the strength of the Savior, the grace of God in caring for His believing children, and God’s justice in putting down those full of self-trust and works righteousness which avails nothing before the Lord.

Verses 54 & 55, -----. (Luke 1:54-55)

We again observe in Mary’s confession that she was convinced God keeps His Word, for in sending the Savior whom she would give birth to, God was fulfilling the promise made to Abraham and all the believers of old. God was helping His servant Israel, His Church, by sending the Messiah, the Christ, the long awaited Redeemer and King who would provide the forgiveness of sins and salvation by accomplishing His mission of mercy: the redemption of the world.

Verse 56, -----. (Luke 1:56)

Our sermon text concludes by informing us that Mary remained with Elisabeth until Elisabeth was in her 9th month of pregnancy with baby John. Mary then returned to her own house in Nazareth of Galilee.

As we’ve pondered our Scripture selection we’ve certainly been shown Mary and Elisabeth were women of true faith. God grant that we also are and remain people of true faith— individuals who trust and confide in Christ Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins, going forward in the true faith unto life everlasting. God grant it for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

m.e.l.