

## **"A TIME TO REJOICE"**

**By**

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**Luke 1:46-55, NRSV**

**<sup>46</sup> And Mary<sup>[a]</sup> said, My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the pride in the thoughts of their hearts. <sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted the lowly; <sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. <sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham, and his descendants forever."**

When is the last time you had a joyful moment, a moment that caused you to rejoice, even rejoice out loud? How did feel? What moved your spirit? Sometimes we rejoice within and sometimes we rejoice out loud in strong emotions. You know, rejoicing is important, very important. When we rejoice, we can easily get caught up in expressing our emotions, which can be overwhelming. Rejoicing is a wonderful way to release energy with joyful excitement. It is connectional and relational. We are connectional and relational people. It's you relating to me and in return, I relate to you, connecting and relating together.

Well, can you imagine how Mary and Elizabeth felt when they saw each other? Luke doesn't say how long they were away from each other, but when they came together, those ladies were filled with joyful hearts. Mary traveled afar to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was with child. As Mary entered the house, joy overflowed, much joy. And when Elizabeth revealed to Mary that she was also with child, Mary became filled with much joy and excitement. Elizabeth said,

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Child you will bear!” As soon as those words were spoken, the baby leaped within her. It was a joyful leap. Elizabeth reaffirmed what the angel had revealed, “You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most Highest. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

Yes, Elizabeth’s reaffirmation revealed the prophecy of the prophets, the promise God made to Abraham. He said to Abraham, “I will make you a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing (Gen. 1:2).” And God chose a woman to bring forth the blessing. Mary, a humble servant, a lineage of King David, was chosen to be the special vessel. “Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill his promise to her.”

In hearing such unexpected, yet wonderful news, I can imagine Mary had much joy, overwhelming joy. I can imagine her rejoicing out loud and singing, “My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. I can sense her acknowledging the goodness of the Lord in a rejoicing spirit. Mary’s strong expression of joy is known as the Magnificat, a song of joyful praise. Mary felt special in knowing that the Lord show favor on her to bring forth the Christ child, Emmanuel, “God with us in flesh appearing.” Isaiah describes the one to come as “Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

What is interesting about this revelation of the holy birth is that it isn’t only about Mary. The revelation of Jesus’ birth is for the whole world, including our time. It’s about you and me. This promise about him is from generation to generation. It’s for the humble, the poor, and the needy. It’s for those troubled, sick, and burdened. God emptied himself not only to experience our pain and suffering but to bring us joy and happiness. He came in the form of a man so we may know his compassion, his mercy, and his unconditional love. Yes, he came through Mary so that we might have life and have it abundantly and have hope, peace, and joy. Yes, because

of the Righteous Lamb of God, we can have joy, peace, and happiness. He came as a baby just for us, but he doesn't want to stay as a baby. He wants us to do more than adore him. He wants us to serve him and be faithful. When we do this, not only will we have joy but God will too. He wants to rejoice over us in truth and righteousness as we walk in his ways.

You know, it's good to rejoice sometimes. When is the last time you rejoiced? When is the last time God rejoiced over you? We are precious in his sight, and he wants to rejoice over us.

When I do my daily walk, I feel joy when I think about his goodness. I feel joy when I think about how he gives me strength day after day. When I look around and see the troubles of this world, I can rejoice because the Lord is keeping me in his grace and mercy. Sometimes I sing to myself as I think about his goodness. Although I am not a good singer, I sing good enough for me. Whatever the Lord has done for you, rejoice with thanksgiving. Apostle Paul says, "Rejoice<sup>e</sup> in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." So, no matter what we may experience as disciples of Christ, let's keep the faith and keep rejoicing in the Lord,

Now, in final thought, Luke didn't only reveal wonderful news about Mary, the mother of Jesus but also revealed the joy and peace that came through her. John Calvin says, "To this day we cannot enjoy the blessing brought to us in Christ without thinking at the same time of that which God gave as adornment and honor to Mary, in willing her to be the mother of his only-begotten Son". Jesus Christ is Emmanuel "God with us". And because of him, fully human, fully divine, we should always want to rejoice and give honor and praise to the Most Highest God. The angels proclaimed the good news of his glory expressing exceeding joy. Let us also proclaim the good news with exceeding joy as we rejoice together as believers in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.