

# The Birth of a Savior – Luke

Luke 1:39-56

“The birth of Jesus anticipated” – December 10, 2017



## Introduction

Joy isn't something that just falls in your lap. Living in a world with harsh realities means that joy is something we have to fight for. When we turn to Luke 1:39-56 Elizabeth (the mother of John) and Mary (the mother of Jesus) meet and are filled with joy. In the Bible, joy is much deeper than the emotion of happiness; more than a pasted-on smile. Joy is a contentment no matter what our circumstances are. It is a happiness that is rooted in God. As we listen in on their meeting and Mary's song, we find several encouragements in how to fight for this joy in a fallen world. Finding joy in God – that's the heart of Christmas!

## Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response.

## Sermon Outline

*How can we fight for joy?*

- I. Lean on godly friends (1:39-45)
- II. Remember what God has *done* (1:46-48)
- III. Cherish who God is (1:49-56)

## Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [Luke 1:39-45](#)

If Mary was struggling with any doubts in her heart after believing God's word to her through the angel, Elizabeth was an encouragement that moved her to confident joy. Mary's 100-mile journey to see Elizabeth reminds us that godly friendships are wonderful, but take work! One way our joy is threatened is when we fall prey to believing lies about God, about others, or about ourselves. The difficulty about believing a lie is that we may not realize we're deceived. That's why godly friends are so important – they are crucial to helping us believe the truth and combat the lies that discourage us and sow seeds of division between friends. It's why being at church each Sunday is important for our joy (see [Hebrews 10:24-25](#)). On the other side of the meeting, Elizabeth is able to rejoice *with* Mary instead of falling into bitterness or jealousy for reigning on her parade. Such a response requires profound, Holy Spirit wrought humility. Such humility is key to maintaining vibrant, godly friendships!

The church directory is not a glorified phonebook, it is a tool for us to use in our covenant love for each other. Take a page of the church directory and pray for the members on

that page. (If today is December 11<sup>th</sup>, you can pray for the people on page 11!) Praying is the language of humility and God-reliance – it's how we lean into God and see His Spirit do in our lives and community what He's doing between Mary and Elizabeth. Another way to use the directory is to regularly find another member you don't know that well yet and reach out to them; to be an Elizabeth to them. Email them to encourage them with God's word. Set up a time to have them over for a meal, to go out for coffee or some other way to have time together where you can learn how they are doing, read God's word together (perhaps a Psalm or the [text we're looking at on Sunday that week](#)), and pray together. Godly friends are a way to fight for joy!

Additional reading: Proverbs 17:17, Romans 12:18, James 1:25, Hebrews 10:25

2) Read [Luke 1:46-48](#)

Starting in v46 Mary *magnifies* the Lord. (You may have heard this referred to as the *Magnificat* – it's the Latin translation for magnify.) To magnify means to enlarge – we don't make God bigger than He already is; but He can be enlarged in our hearts and lives as we make room for Him as supreme in our affections, schedules, budget, thought life, and heart. What are the things that may be crowding God in your life? What are ways you can make room for Him as the supreme value? What is the relationship between what we praise/value and our joy?

Additional reading: Romans 2:4-5, Psalm 16

\*One book useful for thinking about the connection between our joy and what we value (namely our need to value God) is John Piper's book [Desiring God](#), on sale at our bookstall!

3) Read [Luke 1:49-56](#)

Mary rejoices in who God is: mighty, holy, and merciful. Because He is unchanging, those truths of God are not just for her joy, but all those who would fear Him and trust in Him. As a result, her focus turns to what God *will* do in vv51-53. In the English, the verbs are in the past-tense, but she is referring to something in the future that is so certain, it's as good as done. What are the future reversals she refers to in vv51-53? God's economy is different than the world's economy. Knowing that God will bring about these reversals one day, how should that affect the way we live *today*? In other words, if we believe, with Mary, that this future is certain, what does living in line with those realities look like today?

Additional reading: Philippians 2:1-11

### **Prayer of Response**

Spend time praying together in response to God's word for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <http://firstbaptistchurchuppermarlboro-preview.cloversites.com/sermons>