Luke 1:46-47 And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior…

Whenever I see this text the first thing I like to point out is the astonishing words found at the beginning. On a day like today, when we have a baptism to celebrate, the words found here are even more appropriate. What I am talking about is the history of that visit of Mary to Elizabeth, where Mary arrives and calls out a greeting to Elizabeth. Remember Mary through the power and hand of God, is newly pregnant with the baby Jesus.

Our text says, **“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”** The most important thing for you to notice is the work of the Holy Spirit. The text tells us Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, but read carefully. It is also clear that the baby has been affected by that Holy Spirit too! All of this took place because of the voice of Mary. Mary who is carrying the infant Jesus, calling out a greeting to Elizabeth who is carrying the 6 month old baby John in her womb. The text has Elizabeth stating, under the power of the Holy Spirit, **“As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.”** There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit is at work, yes, the Holy Spirit is even at work in the baby in the womb!

I take great comfort and find wonderful hope in this history. There are those churches out there who say that babies can’t believe, for that matter they go as far as to say that children are not held responsible before the Lord until the “age of accountability” because they cannot believe. But such a teaching is really a denial of the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that creates and grants faith. Not a single person can believe unless the Holy Spirit grants them spiritual life and with that life the gift of faith. There is not a single passage in Scripture that tells us the Holy Spirit is limited in this power or that the Holy Spirit works only because your brain has reached such and such a capacity. It is clear in these verses that the baby John in the womb of Elizabeth is reacting to the baby Jesus in the womb of Mary and all of this because of the work and power of the Holy Spirit!

It helps us to grasp that we should not limit the work and power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when we apply water to this child today, or even should we baptize an adult, when we apply that water at the command and with the Word of God the Holy Spirit is at work and the Holy Spirit grants and gives faith to the one baptized. Put your trust and hope in the Words and promises of God. Baptism is a gracious water of life that grants us the marvel of Jesus. As Romans 6 says, **“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death…If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.”** Or as Titus 3 tells us: **“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”** Baptism is God’s gift to us, that He might assure us He has made us His own by faith.

But of course, that is not the only thing we learn in this text. There is more to contemplate as the Holy Spirit moves these women to speak of the salvation that is coming because of what these babies will one day accomplish in accord with God’s will. Our theme: **REJOICE IN GOD OUR SAVIOR.**

If you would, let’s take a brief look at the words of Elizabeth. As far as we know we have no indication that Elizabeth knew of the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy of Mary so what Elizabeth is going to say is the revelation that the Holy Spirit gives her concerning things. She says, **“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear? But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!”**

First, it is true that Mary is called blessed in these words. Not blessed because she is a part of the God head or because she is perfectly holy and without sin! Mary is blessed because God chose her to be the mother of His Son. Because of the birth of Jesus and because of her faith in God, Mary is remembered. What you should really be amazed at is where Elizabeth says, **“Why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”** Actually the Greek text says simply: **“Why is this to me!”** Elizabeth is stating how she is astonished by all that is happening. She who was barren is now going to have a child that the Angel said would be the forerunner to the Christ. Even more so, Elizabeth is stating that she knows that the baby in Mary’s womb is the Savior, the Son of God, the redeemer of the world…just as important, this baby is HER Savior**.** Elizabeth is awed to be in the presence of this Savior! Elizabeth is awed by all that is going on at the hand of God and she is filled with joy. Only a sure faith given by the power of the Holy Spirit could accomplish this joy!

But there is more to learn in the words before us. Once Elizabeth speaks of the wonder of this child, Mary is also moved to speak by the Holy Spirit of the wonder of it all. Mary then says, **“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. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Might One has done great things for me—holy is His name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”**

Again so much to say of these words and what they mean. Please note that Mary starts by giving praise to God, **“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. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.”** Mary too, is astounded by the goodness and grace of God and she expresses that wonder by “glorifying,” that is, “magnifying” the Lord for his work and deeds. But notice that Mary also speaks of her great joy in what God is doing and has done. Her rejoicing is because of **“my Savior.”**

Such an important thing to note especially since the Roman church exalts Mary to more than a mere human. A sinless woman does not need a Savior, yet Mary clearly acknowledges that the child she carries is indeed the Son of God and the Savior, Her Savior! And just as important, Mary does understand that because of the uniqueness of what God has done for her, she will be called blessed by many future generations of people to come, again not because she is the holy, perfect Mary but because the sinful and humble Mary was chosen by God to be the instrument that brought forth the One who would save the world. That’s the reason we know her and bless her and for no other reason.

Mary then continues with her praise of God and the wonder of what is taking place and will take place. She says by the Holy Spirit, **“His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”**

Oh, so much to say and so little time to say it today. Every one of these words is speaking of God, yes, even of that baby in the womb of Mary. Mary’s words clearly show the work of the Holy Spirit as Mary echoes and recites many prophetical promises connected to the Christ and his marvel. Yes, God has mercy. God showers his grace and love upon those who revere him, who hold his name in awe and wonder, or more simply put in today’s world, God’s mercy and grace is upon the believer and has been ever since the Christ has come.

It is also true that God has performed mighty deeds. We could talk of any wonder and marvel revealed in the Scripture, Old or New. The events of the Exodus or the events of taking the land of Canaan. The wonder of Elizabeth’s pregnancy or that of Mary. Again we could go on and on with the mighty deeds of God. I also want to highlight that phrase **“with his arm.”** Many times in the Old Testament that phrase is a reference to the coming Savior and his power. Yes, most of the wonders and marvels of the Old Testament were done with and by Jesus, the pre-incarnate Jesus, who is God, who has always been and always will be. Jesus was at creation and the flood. Jesus and the Father are one so what God has done so has Jesus. It is a wonderful phrase and helps us understand that Mary’s words, the Holy Spirit’s words are pointing to the wonder of Jesus…a babe in a womb on this day.

So, isn’t it true that Jesus scattered the proud and sent the rich away empty. Think of those Jewish scholars and religious leaders who thought they knew God’s Word and yet the 12 year old Jesus astonished them with his knowledge. Or how many times Jesus silenced them and their questions with Godly knowledge beyond their grasp. And the rich, those who put their confidence in wealth or the personal goodness of their lives? They learned the truly empty hull their lives really were.

We go on. Think throughout history of the many thrones and kingdoms that have come and gone, all to serve and fulfill the promises of the Savior and the will of God to save his people. In Jesus is the God who has done this and still does this. Yet, marvel that this God, this all powerful, loving God has come to **“lift up the humble…and feed the hungry.”** I believe those words firmly wrapped in spiritual meaning. The humble are those who feel the weight of their sin and the hungry are those who long for the spiritual food that finally Jesus brought and shared. You cannot look at the life and times of Jesus and not be totally awed by what went on.

Then finally that last line: **“He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”** Notice that the last part of that verse is a reference to the revelations of God’s Word as spoken through the prophets. God had given promises, spoken to the fathers of the people. God saw to it that those promises were fulfilled. Especially the promises of the Savior. In other words, the Word of God is true! **“The servant Israel”** is a reference to all believers who were looking forward to God’s redemption given in the Christ. Those believers knew that already back at the time of Abraham and forward, God had given promises and in Jesus those promises are and will be fulfilled.

Fulfilled because the baby who is born is Jesus. Jesus who will die on the cross for our sins, making full payment on our behalf. Jesus who will rise from the dead and prove beyond doubt that forgiveness, eternal life and salvation is ours by grace through faith. Jesus who will ascend to heaven and now sits and rules over all things for the eternal good of all who believe. It is all done, all fulfilled in Jesus, the baby in the womb because God has promised it and God will carry it out.

There is more to tell but that will do for now. I hope in some way you have caught the excitement, the wonder and marvel of what this fact of history is all about. Clearly Elizabeth and Mary have caught the joy. May their joy and wonder concerning the deeds of God, promises given and fulfilled in Jesus be yours! Amen.