



MARY & ELIZABETH

Part 4 of Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 1:39-45 | October 18, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Hi, Mars Hill. We will continue “Luke’s Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God” today. We’re in chapter 1, verses 39 through 45. If you’ve got a Bible you can feel free to go there.

Father God, I pray that our time would be beneficial. God, I know for some this is going to be a devastating, a devastating moment in their life. God, may they use that opportunity of brokenness and wrecked-ness to run to you, not from you. To seek grace, not to fight. God, please allow my words to be helpful to them and to be loving, but painfully, brutally, prophetically truthful. So God, for us to really maximize our time, we need the Holy Spirit. We need him to wreck us in Jesus’ name. Amen.

We find ourselves in Luke’s Gospel meeting two amazing women today. In the cultural day of the New Testament, women were marginalized, particularly those who were young, single, and those who were elderly and barren, especially if they lived away from major urban centers and were not connected to powerful families. The two women we will get to know today fit all of those criteria. The young, virgin, teenage, rural girl named Mary. Her relative, the elderly, barren Elizabeth, who, like Mary, lives in a marginalized small town, with perhaps a few hundred people.

RECAP OF THE STORY

What has happened thus far in the story is we have learned that the book of Luke is actually a gift from a man named Theophilus. He wanted to know the truth about Jesus, so he hired a historian and doctor named Luke to go investigate all the facts about Jesus and to compile an accurate rendering of the biographical life, death, burial, resurrection of Jesus that culminates in him penning, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the book of Luke. Chapters 1 and 2, which we are in the midst of, are included basically only in Luke. Had Luke not done this historical work interviewing Mary and others, had Theophilus not generously paid for it, we would not have this information which is so exceedingly crucial for our own lives as we investigate the life of Jesus.

Thus far in the story we have learned that Mary was likely a teenage girl, engaged or betrothed to be married. Think 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 years of age, junior high or high school student. That Elizabeth was her relative. They were separated by some distance. Elizabeth had a husband named Zechariah who was a common priest, and he had a very simple, small ministry. They were a barren, elderly couple. The angel Gabriel showed up telling Zechariah that his wife would give birth to a son. He was to be named John, which means “God is gracious.” He would be the preparer and forerunner for the coming of Jesus. The angel Gabriel, one of only two angels mentioned by name in the Bible, then arrives at the presence, perhaps the residence, of Mary. Telling her, you will give birth to a son. His name will be Jesus, which means he saves his people from their sins. You will be the fulfillment to prophecy. You will be the virgin who gives birth to Emmanuel, God-with-us. The angel Gabriel also tells Mary, oh, and by the way, your relative Elizabeth is pregnant as well.

GETTING IN COMMUNITY

And so we pick up the story in chapter 1, verse 39, we see Mary’s immediate obedience to God’s word: “In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.” Elizabeth had not announced publicly that she was pregnant. She was home worshipping God, getting the nursery ready, and celebrating the fact that her husband had been rendered mute for a season. And hearing of this, Mary says, “Well, I’ve got to go see Elizabeth. I love her. We’re close. We’re relatives. I’m pregnant. She’s pregnant. We need to share in one another’s joy.”

And she makes this trek. I’ll show you what it looked like because when you read the Bible, if you’ve not been there, you think, “Oh, maybe she went down the street, around the corner. Maybe she drove.” What did she do? She walked upwards of a hundred miles. The specific town is not stated, though the region is. So she walked about a hundred miles, teenage girl by herself, in perhaps 100-degree heat, in danger. Here’s what it looked like. I’ll show it to you. We took some photographs this summer when we were there. Teenage girl, one hundred miles, walking on her own to go see Elizabeth.

[Shows photos of hill country] That’s the topography.

Here’s my guilty pastoral question. What sacrifices are you making to be in community? [Groaning sound] [Audience laughs]

We read this and we realize, boy, she really wanted to be in community. A hundred mile walk. Some of you have been coming for weeks, months,

years. You've not gotten connected. Why? You say, "Well, it's, eh, it's very hard. It's very hard. I would have to find my keys. I would need to walk all the way to my car right there, and then I would need to open the door. I mean the, the door itself is large. I'd have to open the door. I'd have to sit down in a very comfortable seat, perhaps even with a warmer. And Peter talks about, you know, making sacrifices for the Kingdom so it would be like that. And then I would put my keys in the ignition and I would need to do this. [Turns hand, miming starting a car] Not a full turn, but a half turn, but it's an effort nonetheless. And then I would need to do this. [Mimes driving a car] Maybe even this or this. [Mimes turning a car] And I would need to do this, [Mimes pressing the gas pedal with foot] and occasionally this. [Mimes pressing the brake pedal with foot] And then I would park and then I would have to walk ten, a hundred feet. And, and I could pull a hamstring. So I prayed about it and I felt like it was too much to ask." Mary walked a hundred miles in 100-degree heat! Pregnant teenage girl with no escort to go to community group. We'll see you this week. We'll see you this week. [Laughter]

WE'LL TALK ABOUT ABORTION

The girls come together. The gals come together. A young girl, an older woman. Verse 41, "And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb." We know from previous verses, Elizabeth is about six months pregnant; Mary has just conceived by a miracle of the Holy Spirit. They come together and the Holy Spirit is present, active. The baby in Elizabeth's womb, the sixth-month-old son John the Baptizer (not "the Baptist," he didn't join any denomination. He's John the Baptizer), he leaps in his mother's womb.

So we'll talk about abortion. You didn't want to, now you must. Don't leave. I'll ask everyone to stare at you with a stink eye. Hear me out. Some of you come here feeling, "I have a position on abortion." Did you get it from reading Scripture? Let's see what Scripture says. After all, Luke, who is writing, is a what, vocationally? Medical doctor. And he's writing under the inspiration of God, the Holy Spirit. Who knows when life begins? Who knows what's going on in the womb ultimately, both physically and spiritually? Only God, the Holy Spirit. So let's let the Holy Spirit, God, and Luke, the medical doctor, teach us. Teach us.

A "BABY" IS A BABY

Here's what we'll do. We'll ask, what does it mean when it says that "the baby leaped in her womb"? What does it mean by "baby"?

There are two ways to do theology biblically. There's systematic theology, where you take all the verses, topics, and people that are related and gather them into clusters. There's biblical theology, where you take one author and you trace how they tell the story and the words they use; and the appearance of those words in context helps to give you a particular perspective from a particular author who's inspired by the Spirit.

Let's look at every time Luke uses this word for "baby." He wrote Luke and Acts. He's the primary contributor to the New Testament. Let's see what "baby" means. We'll start in Luke 1:41, which we just read: "When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb." John the Baptizer. This is an unborn, pre-born baby.

Luke 1:44: Elizabeth says, "the baby in my womb leaped for joy." Same word for baby. Some of you say, "Yeah, but there's a difference between a baby in the womb and a baby outside of the womb. The baby in the womb doesn't have civil rights and human rights. The baby outside of the womb does."

Well, let's keep reading. Luke 2:12: "You will find a baby," there's our word, "wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." His name? Jesus Christ. The same word for "baby" is used of the now-birthed Jesus Christ, what you set up every Christmas in your nativity scene, and John the Baptizer in his mother's womb, same word for "baby."

Luke 2:16: "They went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby Jesus lying in a manger."

Luke 18:15-16: "Now they were bringing even infants to him," that is Jesus, "that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.'" The same word for John the Baptizer in Elizabeth's womb is the same word for Jesus lying in the manger, is the same word for the children brought for Jesus to pray over. Think little kids, those that are still crawling or maybe taking their first steps. Or little ones who are pre-school age. Same word. Pre-born. Post-born. Unborn. Born.

Last occurrence is in Acts 7:19 (Luke wrote both books): "He," that is the goddess Pharaoh, "dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their," same word, "infants" – birthed, living, healthy children, that is infanticide – "so that they would not be kept alive." What is in Elizabeth's womb is a human being made by God, bearing the image and likeness of God, deserving of all of the dignity and value that we subscribe and ascribe to all other human life. A baby in a womb is a baby. A baby in a womb is known by God as John was; named by God as John was; could be predestined and chosen for salvation as John was; can be filled by the Holy Spirit as John was, we read in Luke 1:15.

We are not a politically motivated church, but we are a biblically motivated church. And it is a baby. It is a life. I argued with one guy recently. He said, "It's tissue." I said, "So are you." It's unbelievable that even among those who would claim to be Christians that this point is even in question. There is no possible way of reading the Bible and declaring a pregnant woman to be enjoying the presence of anything less than a human being. It's impossible.

ABORTION IS MURDER

I'll read for you from a section of a book I wrote called Religion Saves:

"The Alan Guttmacher Institute is a nonprofit corporation for reproductive health research and policy analysis. The Institute is also a public education

arm of Planned Parenthood.” – Just so you know, Planned Parenthood is a totally different team than Mars Hill. It is the leading abortion provider in America. It was founded by Margaret Sanger, a racist who wanted to murder less-fit races. She was influenced by the same ideology as Nazi Germany. So I want to share these statistics so that you know I’m not just stacking the deck with Christians. -

“It reports that one in six women who have had abortions [claim to be] evangelical Christians.” – Some of you would ask, “Why in the world would we talk about abortion in Mars Hill? We love kids. We love marriage.” Because one in six abortions is to a woman who says that “I belong to Jesus.” That’s why. -

“Based on these statistics, 5.6 million women in our churches” – and hundreds in our church – “have chosen abortion as a way out of an unwanted pregnancy.” – And some of you will try to wriggle off the hook and say, “What about rape, incest, mother’s life in danger?” I would say those are single-percentage cases. Let’s just deal with the majority. Stay on the hook. -

“Each year, 1.5 million American women have an abortion. This means 250,000 [professing] evangelical Christian women could choose to abort [their own] child this year.” – It’s a Holocaust. Mars Hill Church runs, on a good Sunday, ten thousand. We have a thousand children ages ten and under on a good Sunday. That means we roughly see born every year one hundred children. That means if we operate by the same statistics as the general culture, we will murder over thirty of our own children this year. When you leave the service and you see the kids running around, ask where the rest are. If we operate according to the same statistics as the average evangelical Christian church, we will murder between five and six of our own children this year. I have five children. I can tell you exactly what five children look like.

“Did he say murder?” Yes. It’s murder. When you take an innocent human life, you’ve violated one of the Ten Commandments. You have murdered. There are murderers in our midst. There are murderers in our midst. There are women who have murdered their own child. There are men who have pressed their girlfriends and wives to murder their own child. There are bloody hands all over Mars Hill. -

“Women ages 20 to 24 obtain 32 percent of all abortions. Teenagers obtain 20 percent. Forty percent,” – listen to this – “Forty percent of women ages 15 to 44 have had at least one previous abortion.” – Some of you say, “Oh, so you’re anti-woman?” No. I wish we would stop murdering young women. Please take note that half of those murdered are women. How can you be pro-woman/pro-murder of women? Only Satan could sell that. -

“Fifty percent of women who have abortions use it as their sole means of birth control.” – See, as Christians, for us, the line is no sex before or outside of heterosexual marriage. Those who sin against God but still want to be somehow, somewhat responsible then use birth control. And others just have sex, get pregnant, and murder the child. Half of abortions are from those who didn’t use any birth control. Many who have an abortion have a second abortion. They’re serial killers. “Procedure”? Murder. Much more accurate word.

HIS NAIL-SCARRED HANDS FOR OUR BLOODY HANDS

What does the Bible have to say about this? In the Old Testament there is an occasion where the Bible does speak about what happens if a pregnant woman is struck by a man and the baby dies. Here is what it says, Exodus 21:22-25: “You shall pay,” that’s what it says, you shall pay! “Life for life . . . hand for hand, foot for foot . . . wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” It’s a capital offense. You don’t put a bumper sticker on your car. You don’t put a t-shirt on your back. You don’t march in a parade. You die.

These two women come together. Mary has Jesus in her womb. In our day she would be taken to the clinic, “You’re a teenager. You’re unmarried. You’re from a small town. You’re poor. You’re illiterate. We should get rid of that burden to you named God.” Elizabeth has in her womb a boy named John. God’s already named him. He’s already filled with the Holy Spirit. He’s already chosen to be a prophet.

Both of these young men are going to die brutal, premature deaths. They too will be murder victims. John will be beheaded because of his devotion to Jesus. And Jesus, as a young man, will go to the cross though he never sinned. He will have spikes driven through his hands, spikes driven through his feet. He will have stripes across his back from a flogging.

And he will die. Why? For sin, as a substitute.

And you murderous mothers, and you complicit fathers, and you godless evildoers, those who worship death, those who murder babies, those who sacrifice children, Jesus would say this to you: “I shall pay. My life for your life, my hand for your hand, my foot for your foot, my wound for your wound, stripe for stripe.” That’s Jesus. When Exodus says that baby murderers should be punished, Jesus said, “I’ll take their place.” Hand for hand. Nail-scarred hand for nail-scarred hand. Foot for foot. Nail-scarred foot for nail-scarred foot. Stripe for stripe across his back. His life for my life. His life for your life. That’s Jesus.

Some of you would sit here and argue and say, “How dare God judge me?” How great that God would die for you. The God who judges you is the God who dies for you. The God who judges you is the God who forgives you. The God who judges you wants you to know that even if you’ve not had a murder, you have blood on your hands. That we’re all murderers. That Jesus died for our sin, that we murdered God. That any of you who would even hear this and feel self-righteous, saying, “I’ve done some bad things. At least I’ve not killed a baby,” you’ve killed God. We all come with bloody hands. And Jesus dies for us. He rises for us. He loves us. He forgives us. He embraces us. He pursues us for friendship.

See, some of you want to soft-sell the abortion issue. Don’t. Because if you do, you’ll diminish the magnificence of what Jesus has done. To even forgive murderers. And as I said, to some degree we all are.

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF LIFE

Pray for the women in this church who have murdered their child and today will be wrecked. Pray for the men in this church who have knocked up girlfriends, wives, pressured them toward murder and will be wrecked. Pray for those who will come forward after the service to be prayed for by pastors and leaders, that the Holy Spirit would meet with them. Pray for this church as we are publishing books and starting redemption groups to help rape victims and abuse victims and molestation victims and drug addicts and sex addicts and alcoholics and those who deal with the haunting shame of taking the life of their own child. There are many men and women who have worked through the absolute devastation that their own sin has caused in their life and legacy. And there's hope for us all in Christ.

Many of you will leave. Many of you will never come back. Some of you will quibble over the details. Some of you will turn into religious attorneys. Some of you will want to argue the finer points. Some of you will take issue with being yelled at.

I love you. You're wrong. You may not even know Christ; if Christ doesn't pay, you will. And rather than arguing, you should apologize to God. And if you don't, he will deal justly with you. Do not think that you can murder a child and stand before God and say, "I am pro-choice." God will say, "I choose hell for you because you chose it for yourself." If you don't choose Jesus, you choose justice.

[Silence] You need to feel it.

You need to feel it. And you men, you need to own it.

That evangelicals would rail against abortion and let a bunch of mama's boys carry the name of Jesus is a reprehensible truth. That 60 percent of all Christians are female; we can't even get the men to step up. Of those quarter-million women in America this year who will claim to be Christians and murder their child, how many of them do you think have a Christian boyfriend who said he loved the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength and didn't include his pants? Gentlemen, it's not about you. It's about Jesus. It's not about your life. It's about your legacy. It's not about sex. It's about salvation.

And I tell you as a guy who understands. I grew up in a home that was pro-life. My parents were Catholic. I was not just pro-choice, I was pro-abortion. I argued for it in high school as a student body president. I argued for it in college as a freshman. I believed that less-fit people should be killed for purposes of population control. I thought that those who were less fit and less intelligent-the logical outcome of Darwinian thinking-should be killed. Of course, I thought that I was more fit and intelligent. And so I was in the position to decide who would die, not "to be murdered." It's the apex of arrogance and pride, to be God, choosing who lives and dies.

By God's grace alone, I didn't impregnate a woman before I was married. God saved me at the age of nineteen. I stopped having sex. I experienced Romans 12: Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

I started reading the Bible and I realized, God is the author of life. Life belongs to God. God alone is the one who gets to decide who lives and dies. And he may speak of capital crimes and punishments in the Bible, but he certainly doesn't have any Scriptures that say, "If it's inconvenient; might disrupt your college studies; could cost you some money, gentlemen, in child support payments, feel free to murder that kid." But had one of my girlfriends who had been sleeping with me become pregnant come to me and said, "I think I'll have an abortion," I would have said, "That's a good idea." By God's grace alone. By God's grace alone. By God's grace alone. [Silence]

We expect more, gentlemen. And if we don't get more, you'll deal with me and the elders. [Silence]

Today we decide how many children will live at Mars Hill. Today we decide how many kids will be in the nursery next year. It's a very important day. [Silence]

h2. Prayer for All of Us Murderers

Father God, I feel prompted to pray right now. God, for those women who hear this that have murdered their own child, I pray, Lord God, that they would be devastated. That maybe for the first time in their life they would stop making excuses, pretending, not talking about it, not confessing it, calling it a procedure. And that they would be devastated. I pray, Lord God, right now for those women who would want to, need to cry, that they would.

God, I pray for those men. The perverts, the users, the abusers, the idolaters. The boys in men's bodies. God, those guys that would come here, raise their hands in worship and then put them on their girlfriend? God, that you would destroy them. That you would emotionally, mentally destroy them. That you would wreck them.

God, I pray we would be a people who love you, who love life. That, Lord God, we would see marriage as a blessing and sex within marriage as a gift. And children. Children birthed. Not murdered. Birthed.

God, I pray for those who are feeling the weight. That they would know, Lord God, there is now no condemnation in Christ. That only through Jesus is there forgiveness of sin and new life. Jesus, only through your death can that death be dealt with. And only through your resurrection can they rise up to live a new life.

God, I thank you that through election, like you chose John in the womb, you could have chosen their baby in the womb. We impose nothing on you, God, but we live in hope and faith that the God who is a father would take the murdered and make them his adopted sons and daughters. Those who never got a chance to hear about Jesus, that Lord God, they would be filled with the Holy Spirit as John was from his mother's womb.

God, we don't have an answer to that question: what happens to the dead unborn? But we have a God that we trust. God, I pray for those who are here,

that they would realize that they are murderers. That they have, through sin, murdered the Son of God. That their hands are covered in blood. And, Lord Jesus, we thank you that you say, "I will pay. A life for a life, hand for a hand, foot for a foot, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." Amen.

WHAT IS PROPHECY?

Elizabeth then prophesies. The mothers come together. They embrace. As they do, the sons in their wombs respond. John the Baptizer responds. Elizabeth responds. She prophesies. I'll read you her prophecy in a moment.

Let me explain to you prophecy. Prophecy is where God chooses someone and uses someone to speak through them. It happens in the Old Testament. It happens in the New Testament. We believe in it at Mars Hill Church. We believe in it. Absolutely. It is sometimes foretelling the future, predicting future events. About 25 percent of your Bible was prophetic when it was written, predicting future events. Sometimes it is forth-telling, giving a personal word to someone. God wants someone to know something, so he sends someone to give them a personal word. It's a particularly kind ministry. We see this kind of prophecy from Elizabeth.

TRUE VS. FALSE PROPHECY

Now, let me explain to you how we judge between true prophecy, false prophecy; true prophets, false prophets. Number one, true prophecy is under biblical authority. So prophecy isn't the highest authority, Scripture is. In Acts 17, Paul, who prophesies some of the New Testament, he is teaching and the Bereans are considered to be noble because they don't believe everything even Paul says. They test it by the whole of Scripture. So number one, true prophecy is under, tested by, accountable to Scripture.

Number two, true prophecy is under church authority. All of I Corinthians 14 is written about gatherings of people in worship services as the church. And it says that if someone has a prophecy, it needs to be tested by the leadership to confirm that it's in fact from God. So we don't just open a mic and let people prophesy. It needs to be tested.

And number three, it is true. What they say is 100 percent true. Deuteronomy 18:21-22. It says, here's how you know who a true and false prophet is: the true prophet, everything they say happens; the false prophet, it doesn't. That means even a false prophet that is 80 or 90 percent correct is still a false prophet.

So we believe in prophecy. Absolutely. Some of the most significant turning points in my pastoral ministry have occurred because of prophecy. Absolutely. The whole reason I'm in ministry is God spoke to me and he said to plant churches, train men, preach the Bible, marry Grace. That's what I've been doing ever since.

When God called me into ministry as a new Christian at the age of nineteen, my parents, who were Catholic, they were very worried that I'd left the Catholic Church and now I'm talking about becoming a pastor instead of a priest. And I told them, I just love Jesus, and he told me to marry Grace and preach the Bible. I can't be a priest. I want to get married and have kids and be a daddy. And serve Jesus. So they brought in my grandmother from Grand Forks, North Dakota. She's the expert. My grandmother was a devout Catholic woman. Had keys to multiple churches. Prayed in them all day every day. The priests got so tired of letting her in and out they just gave her keys. That's my grandma. When my grandfather died, she joined a Catholic order of unpaid nuns. She lived under a vow of poverty. A very simple woman. Pre-Vatican II, Latin Mass Catholic, if you're keeping score. Old school Catholic. Irish Catholic. O'Driscoll.

She flew in to check me out. She met with me. Had a lot of questions. She was sort of the matriarch in the family, the spiritual leader. And at the end, she told my parents, "God's done something in his life and God's called him to what he's going to do. We need to support him. He doesn't need to be Catholic. He doesn't need to be a priest. He needs to do what God told him to do." So my whole family was okay with it. Now they're really okay with it. They go to Mars Hill and I baptized my parents and the whole deal, so it's all good.

And there are many Catholics who know and love Jesus. I wasn't one of them. Okay? I'm not saying that all Catholics are not Christians, but I wasn't one of them. It was a prophetic moment in my life that allowed my family to support what we were doing. And it was really cool to see my dad this morning at church with my mom, them carrying their Bibles.

Prophecy is a beautiful thing. It is sometimes abused, and liars give false prophecy. But we believe in it.

ELIZABETH PROPHECIES: CHILDREN ARE A BLESSING

You want to hear Elizabeth's prophecy? Here it is. Chapter 1, verse 41: "And Elizabeth was filled with," that's a lot of, "the Holy Spirit." This is the Holy Spirit taking this woman and her deepest desires and bringing them, birthing them to life. "And she exclaimed with a loud cry," so she's prophesying-you've got to see this: Elizabeth, six months along; Mary, teenage gal, peasant, maybe illiterate. She's just conceived. Their wombs are together. Elizabeth puts a hand on Mary, prophesies, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" What are children? A blessing. You, Mary, are blessed of God! You've got a baby.

See, in our world, children are a curse. "Oh, you put on weight. You get stretch marks. You know, they teethe and burp and fart and cry and poop and breastfeed. And you're exhausted and they cost money and they're inconvenient." No! They're a blessing! A pooping, farting, eating, yelling, screaming, teething, expensive blessing! Psalm 127 says children are a what, Mars Hill? A blessing!

I've got five kids. We lost one in miscarriage. It is something that haunts me to this day. You know what three-year-old Gideon is? A blessing. Alexie?

A blessing. Calvin? A blessing. Zac? A blessing. Ashley? A blessing. I tell them all the time. You guys are my blessing. You're my blessing! I was gone in Austin preaching this weekend. Got home late last night. I'm upstairs, got my jammies on, I'm washing my face. In walks my teenage daughter. She's got a big smile. I said, "What's up girlie-girl?" She said, "Oh, I love you Dad, and I just missed you. And I'm so glad you're my dad," and gives me a huge kiss on the cheek. I looked at her. I said, "You are my blessing!" They're not a burden. They're a blessing.

Ask the average woman, are you pregnant? Yes! It's like she says she has cancer. "Oh, my gosh! What's wrong? Do you have cancer or are you pregnant?" You know, well. Blessing. Blessing.

ELIZABETH CALLS JESUS "LORD"

Listen to this, verse 43, it's really good: "And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" In that culture the older person would be honored by the younger. The older person wouldn't honor the younger. This is highly unusual. "You, Mary, are the mother of my Lord." The first person in the Bible to call Jesus Christ "Lord" is Elizabeth. And she does it while Jesus is in Mary's womb, newly conceived. It's not tissue. It's the Lord. She's worshipping Jesus.

So now we've got the eternal Son of God coming into human history through the womb of the poor, marginalized, unmarried, virgin, rural, potentially illiterate young girl to identify with us sinners by living a humble, simple life; by being tempted, though not sinning so that he could be our substitute and reconcile us to God and take away our sin and send us the Holy Spirit so that we might have new life birthed in us. The new life like Mary was enjoying through the presence of Jesus. We get the life of Jesus in us through the Holy Spirit.

And Elizabeth says, "I can't believe I'm in the presence of the mother of my Lord." She hasn't even seen him live, walk on water, raise the dead, heal people, die on a cross, resurrect. But she's already worshipping him and claiming him as God. Love it! [Applause]

WORSHIPING BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Got to hear this. Verse 44. There are so many bullets in this gun. It's amazing. "For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears," – the what? – "the baby in my womb leaped for joy." How did that happen? Gabriel said, in Luke 1:15, John will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. The two women come together. The old covenant, the new covenant. The promises, the fulfillment. The prophet, the Lord. Their bellies touched. Boom! John worships. Yes! There he is! John in the womb, six months old. Predestined of God, saved, elect, chosen, named. Filled with the Holy Spirit. Starts off as an in-utero worship leader. I can't think of a stronger argument for personhood in the womb than that. It's Pastor John the worship leader. He is – we don't know what he's doing – singing, dancing, celebrating in the womb. See, the proper response, Mars Hill, the proper response to Jesus is, "He's Lord and I worship him by the power of the Holy Spirit." That's the response. [Applause]

Here's the final word of Elizabeth's outstanding prophecy. "And blessed is she who believed," – There it is, faith! – "that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." Here's the process. God speaks. Mary believes. God blesses. Mary sings. That's the pattern for worship. Mars Hill, God speaks. Jesus is God. Jesus has come on a rescue mission. Jesus atoned for the sins of the world. Jesus makes enemies friends. Jesus makes murderers worshipers. Jesus makes idolaters sons and daughters of the Most High God! Jesus speaks with nothing less than the authority of God as God. And Jesus speaks through the Word. And Jesus prays, "Father, sanctify them by the truth. Your word is the truth." And Jesus speaks today. He speaks through the Scriptures. He speaks through your conscience. He speaks through the Holy Spirit.

OUR RESPONSE TO JESUS

And he speaks and we are to believe. We are to respond. We are to trust him. We are to love him. We are to follow him. We are to enjoy him. We are to serve him. We are to emulate him. God speaks. We believe. God blesses. For us it is forgiveness of sin. It is the removal of the old nature. It is the introduction of the new nature. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is the enjoyment of God's people. It is eternity with Christ. God blesses and we sing! We sing under the power of the Holy Spirit.

We'll deal with it in coming weeks, but Mary, in the next section, sings: "And Mary said," – or sang – "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit," – down in the depths, in the gut – "rejoices" – she's happy – "in God, my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;" – and we do, Mary. You were blessed. – "for he who is mighty has done great things for me," – Want that for all of you. – "and holy is his name." – He's not like us. – "And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation." – Don't murder your children. Let them fear him from generation to generation. – "He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever." Mary sings, maybe with one hand on her womb and the other raised in song.

Father God, I pray against the enemy, his servants, their works and effects. I pray against this culture of death. I pray against murder being called a procedure. I pray against those who would argue with the Scriptures. For those who would choose death over life, Satan over Jesus, lies over truth, murder over life. Lord God, save us, we pray, from ourselves. I pray for the men, the perverts, the porn addicts, the users, the liars, the wife beaters, the cheats, the fornicators, the worthless, the damned, the kindling for the fires in the end. That you would send them favor like you did Mary. That you would send them the Holy Spirit like you did Mary. That you would cause enemies to be worshipers. That you would cause them in this moment to experience new life, new birth through Jesus by the Spirit in the depths of their soul. God, we pray for our city and all cities. We pray for our nation and all nations. And God, we know it is not politics. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ which is our hope. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ which holds the power. And it is the gospel of Jesus Christ which we invite by the power of the Holy Spirit to be unleashed so that the joy that these women had would

be shared by the multitudes. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You need to sing! Don't argue. Sing! So, if you're ready, we're going to take communion, remember Jesus' broken body, shed blood. You're going to stand. You're going to sing. The Holy Spirit will help you. If you want to become a Christian, you want to give your life to Christ, you meet me out there with some leaders and we'll pray for you. We'll baptize you, showing Jesus lived, died, rose so that your old life is dead and your new life starts right now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, cleansed from sin like water cleanses us from filth. We'll all celebrate. If you need prayer, you join us up front after the service or in the foyer. You guys ready? You got to sing!

[End of Audio]

Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.