Mary's Advent Joy — Delivery Transcript

Luke 1:26–56 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, December 15, 2024 · *Advent 2024*

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If you have your Bible, we're going to be in Luke chapter 1. You can turn to Luke chapter 1. And as you're turning there, if you're new to Broadview, we typically preach through books of the Bible. And we had just finished the book of Genesis and we're about to dive into the Psalms, but in between those two times, we're doing an advent series on a genealogy in Matthew chapter one, which sounds terribly boring, I understand, but if you were an ancient person which you're not, but if you were, it would be extremely interesting.

So my goal is to try to make it interesting for us because back then the genealogy of a person was the resume or CV for why that person was an interesting person and worthy of your consideration. And it's no surprise when you get to Jesus' genealogy, there's some big names in there, like Abraham, the founding father of the people of Israel, and David, King David, who had a covenant from God that of your kingdom there's going to never be any end. But the thing that's most unique about Jesus' genealogy that we've been looking at the last three weeks is the mention of some women in Jesus' genealogy.

And back then women weren't well d the culture didn't view women back then the way we view women today unfortunately. And so when they were mentioned in the genealogy, it was a very big deal. And the kind of women, the specific women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy, is an even bigger deal because they were not what you might call. How do I put this? They were not the kind of women you would imagine would be in the genealogy of the Son of God. They were not Jewish. They were in many cases marginalized.

Immoral, outcast, alienated. In the case of Rahab, she was a prostitute. In the case of Tamar. She you know, she was a little bit deceptive in her approach to things. In the case of Ruth, she was a Moabite, and each of them had an abiding and sincere faith in the Lord And it was through their faith in God and their obedience to act on that faith in God that put them in a position for God to use them mightily for his redemptive purposes through Jesus Christ. And that's why they're listed in the genealogy and we've been looking at each one.

First we started with Tamar and her story. We're not going to dive back into that, but then after Tamar we looked at Rahab. Rahab was a prostitute in Jericho who believed in God to the point that she hung a scarlet thread out her window and God delivered her from the judgment that came on Jericho. She gave birth to a little boy named Boaz, and Boaz we looked at last week who married Ruth, who was a Moabite woman. And through Boaz and Ruth came a boy named Obed, through Obed came Jesse, through Jesse came David, and King David is one of the big names in the genealogy.

The only other woman mentioned in that series of names is a woman that isn't even mentioned by name. She's called Uriah's wife. Anyone know who Uriah's wife is? You might know her by the name Bathsheba. And Bathsheba was Uriah's wife before she became David's object of lust when he was s prowling around in his palace f Rooftop and he saw Bathsheba taking a bath and called her to himself and through a grievous act of sin God somehow worked for the good and through that messiness called David to a point of genuine repentance.

And through their union gave birth to a boy named Solomon, who was used by God in very significant ways. And as much as I wish Bathsheba's story was a powerful illustration of advent joy it's just not. It's not quite doing the work it needs to do. And so we're skipping Uriah's wife until next week because what better story for a family service with all the kids in here than David and Bathsheba? I thought that's perfect. I can't wait. So now you laugh. I'm being serious. We're going to look at your rise wife next week.

But I promise it will be discreet and it's going to be fine and we're not going to go crazy. But if that's next week, the only other remaining mother of Jesus is Mary, the biological mother of Jesus. And Mary's story, I think more than any other mother of Jesus beautifully illustrates advent joy and what advent joy unlocks in the human heart. And how advent joy our mo what advent joy requires for the full potential of that joy to be unleashed in our lives. And it may not be exactly what you think it is.

Now if you're new to Mary's story, if you're new to Bible study, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a young, young teenager when she got the news that she was going to give birth to the Messiah. She was betrothed to be married to a young older boy, still a teenager, but he would have been 18, 17 years old His name was Joseph. And back then a betrothal was different from an engagement. Lots of people get engaged today before they get married. And an engagement is kind of like I'm for real, for real serious.

But at any time in the engagement, you could be like, just kidding I change my mind, yet cold feet, it's a very sad thing and they might never talk to you again, but it's allowable, right. But back then a betrothal was a little bit more serious than that. A betrothal was a type of marriage. In fact it was contractually you were obligated contractually your parents would

get in on the deal, they would create some kind of financial incentives and considerations and once you were betrothed there was no getting out of it.

You were to be together for that one year, but you weren't living together. There was no sexual intimacy. And that's where Mary finds herself when she gets the news. That she's going to have a baby, even though she's never engaged in any kind of sexual intercourse. And so you can imagine the news was extremely upsetting for Mary to receive. And so that's where we find her in Luke chapter 1, starting in verse 26. The sixth month, I'm just going to get back to that sixth month in a minute. But in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth.

To a virgin engaged or betrothed to a man named Joseph of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary, and the angel came to her and said, Greetings, favored woman the Lord is with you. But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering, what kind of greeting could this be? The angel told her, don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Now listen, you will conceive. And give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great. He'll be called the Son of the most High.

And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end. And so Mary asked the angel, well, how can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man? And the angel replied to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you. And the power of the most High will overshadow you, and therefore the Holy One to be born will call be called the Son of God. And consider your relative Elizabeth.

Even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who is called childless, for nothing will be impossible with God. Now I want you to underline this little phrase here. This is the sixth month for her who was called childless. That's the same time reference that was used in verse 26. That's one reason I think this little section fits together. And the reference to six months was a reference to the six months of pregnancy being experienced by another woman. And her name was Elizabeth.

Her story is right before Mary's story. Elizabeth was married to a guy named Zechariah. They were both extremely, extremely old. But they were so old that having a baby at that age would be unheard of, much less than a woman who would ne who had never been able to have a baby up until that point. And yet even though all that's true, the angel comes to Zechariah, the dad, and says, you're going to have a baby boy. And this baby boy is going to be special, and he's going to be like Elijah in the Old Testament, and that he's going to make way for the Messiah.

He's going to pave the way for the coming of the Lord, and he's not going to drink any wine, and he's going to live in the desert and eat bugs, and you're going to call him John, whether

you like it or not. And Zechariah gets that news and he says for real? Like I d I just don't see it. And the angel says, well since you're struggling to believe, I'll just take your voice from you. You can think about it for a while, and he sits and thinks about it for nine months, not able to speak until eventually John is born.

So he six months into that pregnancy, Mary gets this news. Now I rate I think the context is really instructive because it illustrates something about advent joy or just joy from the Lord in particular. The joy of the Lord is much like hope in the Lord and faith in the Lord. It doesn't always visit us in a package that is appealing. Sometimes it comes to us in a form that is easy to reject. In the case of Rahab, it came in the form of Israelite spies who came to destroy her hometown, and yet that was the lifeline of hope God was trying to establish in her life Similarly for Zechariah, or in the case of Mary, this advent joy that he was wanting to unlock in her life was coming in the form of life-disrupting news.

And the same is true for you and me. Sometimes when the Lord wants to unleash joy in your life, it's going to require you to put in a little effort to unlock its full potential. It's going to be uncomfortable. It's going to be difficult. It's not just these, you know, daisies and lollipops and the Lord's so awesome. That's not how the Lord works. He doesn't force his force himself on anybody. He does not just kind of overwhelm your senses and becomes irrational and all your life is just magically all amazing.

That's not how the God of the Bible works He will come and unlock joy in your life, but often it'll come in a package where you're going to have to do a little effort to figure out what's real. And that's what happens to Mary. And you know that's what happens to Mary because of two words in verse 29. It says that she was greatly troubled by the greeting she heard from the angel. And she wondered or pondered what the greeting could mean. Now we don't know why she was greatly troubled.

Maybe it was because Gabriel came in angelic form with lights on and all the stuff. Maybe not, maybe he was very uns umassuming and just looked like a normal guy. Whatever the reason she is diatarassō is the Greek word, and the only reason I mention it is the word terasso means to be confused or perplexed or like what is going on. But when you add the Greek prefix dia, D-I-A- That's a preposition that means through or thoroughly. And so the idea is that she was thoroughly perplexed. Like v extremely confused.

It wasn't just kind of sort of I wonder if no, she was she was deeply unsettled by the greeting, you're highly favored, and God is with you. Now I don't know if you've ever been troubled by that phrase, but you can imagine if you're in Mary's shoes. Hey girl, you are highly favored from God. He's about to do great things in your life. He's with you. And you're thinking to yourself, oh no. You know, what does that mean? And not only is she deeply troubled, the next word is the word dia legitsomai.

It's again a Greek word legitsomai means to think or ponder something, to talk with yourself about a matter through to the end. I don't know if anybody else talks to themselves. I read an article the other day that some people don't have an inner voice. You guys read that? That's crazy. My favorite conversations are with myself throughout the day. I don't know what I'd do without my inner voice, but some people have no inner voice. Mary obviously had an inner voice, and she's talking to herself, with herself, about herself about this phrase.

What does it mean that I'm highly favored of God? And again, you got the Greek prefix dia, so she's intense. It is it is to the max troubled, upsetting, and I'm trying to figure out what's going on. And I think that is the perfect picture of the effort that is required if you want advent joy unlocked in your life. God is not going to overwhelm you with joy in an irrational way. That's not how the Lord works. It requires you to reason critically. It requires you to think. About what is true and what isn't true.

And if you're not willing to reason and think and explore intellectually what is and what is not when it comes to the joy of the Lord, then you will not receive it. And this really came home for me this last week and I was talking with a friend of mine who is in involved in a in a certain level of counseling and the counseling we might call secular counseling. Not that there's something terrible about secular counseling, but one of the tools that the secular counseling had provided was a list of statements or affirmations that once you read these statements it's to kind of build you up and remind you of what's true.

And as we were working through those statements, some of the statements, the feedback was I just don't know if that is true I mean doesn't doesn't that sound kind of ridiculous? And to be honest, on the surface it did sound a little bit ridiculous. And if you hear something that's affirming and encouraging, but deep down in your heart you say it doesn't pass the smell test, it sounds ridiculous. I don't think it's true. I don't care how affirming it is, I don't care how encouraging it is, it's not going to move you emotionally or spiritually because it has no truth you've got to believe the statement in order for it to have an its intended effect.

You've got to think and reason. And so in that case, we went through those statements and we said, okay, if it doesn't make sense from that perspective, what is it about the biblical worldview, if we look at this statement through the lens of the gospel and we look at how the Apostle Paul said very something very similar, why was he able to say it? What was true about his belief in God and Christ and the new heaven, the new earth, and we began to think deeply about these things, all of a sudden those statements took on incredible new meaning, incredible new power to strengthen and encourage and enable that person to endure through great fear and difficulties and hardship.

And that's what advent joy looks like. It requires you to think critically. You can't just feel it. God doesn't just, you know force it. You've got to reason. Now, how do you do that? The example of Mary, I think, is so beautiful. She does a couple of things. First, the angel says,

you've got to chill out. You'll never think clearly when you're afraid. Fear clouds the judgment. Fear blinds you to things that you need to see. And so for you to think clearly, you're going to have to stop feeling fear.

Now I know what you're saying or thinking. You're saying, well I don't like feeling fear. I just feel afraid. I can't help my feelings. Don't tell me what to feel, Wes. And I'd say, I'm not trying to tell you how to feel. I'm just telling you don't feel that way all the time. And that is a choice, right? You can't help your feelings, but you can help how long you feel what you feel by what you think. You're not a you're not a victim of your emotions. Your emotions are what they are, but you can take your mind and truth and inform your emotions so that they change from what they are to something else.

And if you don't believe me I would encourage you to consider what this angel is telling to Mary. Chill out, don't be afraid. A lot of people never get joy because they're afraid of what the quest is going to cost them or what the truth that they might discover. The second thing he says to Mary is, listen. Now listen. He says it in verse, let's see, the angel came to her. Don't be afraid, verse 30. Verse 31, listen. And he gives these statements of fact. You're going to conceive. You're going to give birth.

The boy's name is Jesus. Whether you like it or not, you don't get to name your child. That kind of stinks. He's going to be great. He will be called the Son of the most High. The Lord God is going to give him the throne of David. He's going to reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end. All of those truths were extremely important for Mary to understand if the joy of the Lord was going to be unlocked in her life. And there's a lot of people who don't experience Christian joy because they're not willing to put in the effort of listening carefully to what God is saying.

And then maybe in our case we're not willing to pay the price of reading what God has already revealed in his word. We're not willing to put in a little effort to think hard on what is actually being revealed. We just want it to be, you know. I don't know, put in a nice little tidy little package and make it easy for me to hear, and I don't really want to think about it too hard. You'll never get joy that way. You've got to listen carefully. Listen to what's being said.

A lot of us on math problems, I know I when I would do in math, I would get a lot of problems wrong because I didn't read all the instructions. And listen all the way through. You got to s chill out. Listen carefully. And then the third thing Mary does is she asks questions, which I think, again, a lot of Christians miss out on great joy in the Lord because they think if I ask God questions that's not nice or that's not right. God doesn't want me to qu I don't want to question the Lord.

I mean He's the Lord after all I don't want to question God That is nonsense. Never in the scripture are you forbidden from asking questions of the Lord. In fact, the scripture

encourages us through Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah, come and let's reason together. Now you can ask the Lord in a sinful way, certainly. You can have a unbelieving spirit, but asking questions, who, what, when, where, why, how, those are wonderful things to ask of the Lord. And in fact, I think the Lord delights in those questions because it's in the process of asking questions that you get to say Seek after the Lord.

And in seeking after the Lord, he gets to reveal himself because again, he doesn't just force himself. He desires to be desired. And in desiring the Lord through asking the questions, that is when the joy is unlocked in your heart. So do not be afraid of doubt. Doubt is not an enemy of your faith. Mary was full of doubt and questions, and it was fine for her to ask the questions. Now she might not have liked the answer. To be honest, the answer was not all that grip fulfilling, even from my own perspective.

How am I going to have a baby without having sex? Oh, it's the Holy Spirit. That's not very descriptive. The most High shadow. The shadow of the most High is going to overhadow you and you're going to have a baby. Well that's it's not super descriptive, but at least it's an answer, right? So God may not always tell you exactly what you want to hear and the way that you want to hear it, but a lot of you don't have answers to your questions because you're not asking the question. And some of you aren't asking the question because you think, well, I'm maybe I'm afraid of what God is going to say, or maybe I'm afraid God will be mad at me.

Maybe that's a sign of unbelief. It's not a sign of unbelief. It's a sign of faith to ask questions, to ask questions from a place of faith seeking understanding. So she asks the question, how am I going to have a baby if I've never had sex with a man? And he gives an answer. But he doesn't just give an answer, does he? What's the next thing he does He says, don't be afraid, listen. She asks the question, and then after he answers the question, he says in verse Thirty-six, consider, consider your relative Elizabeth.

Even she has conceived a son in her old age. And it's going to be the sixth month of her pregnancy. So this is another thing that the reason why the Lord encourages us to ask questions is because truth doesn't have an agenda, it has no reason to hide, and truth always has evidence. The truth of Christianity will always evidence itself externally. In this case, the truth of God's word to Mary was evidenced externally through the relative Elizabeth. And he's saying, if you don't believe me that you can have a baby without having sex with a man.

Just look at Elizabeth. I mean everybody called her childless. She was that old lady who could never have any babies and she was super, super, super old, even though we don't know what the age is, and she has a baby. Look at the evidence, consider it, weigh it, and let that encourage and stimulate the joy of the Lord in your heart. And that's exactly what she does. But he doesn't he doesn't just say consider the evidence, he says consider the evidence. With an open mind. He says at the very end, nothing is impossible with God.

Verse 37. And a lot of people today don't unlock joy in their heart because of a prior commitment to a certain set of assumptions that deny the possibility that God could XYRZ. The most easiest example is like atheist or secular types who say, well, Christianity can't be true because dead people don't rise from the grave because miracles aren't possible, because we live in a closed system of naturalism where nature is all there is, was, and ever will be. And therefore Christianity is false because miracles don't happen. Well you're dismissing outright the possibility of the resurrection because of a prior commitment to an atheistic materialistic worldview, what if that's not true?

What if it isn't just nature? What if there is a God? If there is a God, then miracles could happen. If you allow for a God who can do X, Y, or Z, then nothing's impossible. And so maybe you should look at the evidence with an open mind instead of a closed mind. And it's not just like believing in God's existence. In our case or your case, it may be God is calling you to a certain kind of thing and deep down you're wrestling, well I don't know how this and that and it's impossible and the Lord would say yeah it's impossible with you it's impossible from your resources but it's not impossible with me and I just need you to trust me.

And I need you to listen and weigh this evidence from a mindset that I can, even if you can't. Look at it with an open mind. Now that is difficult. All right. That takes Discipline, it takes effort, but that's what Mary does, and that's why Mary gets to a point of faith. In verse 38, she says I maybe she said it kind of begrudgingly and wrong girls wrong to do it. Or maybe she was happy and joyful. I don't know. But she says, well may it be to me as you have said.

Which I kind of take as let's see. We'll we'll see if this is we'll see if this is what the Lord wants to do. If he wants to do it, then I'm his servant. Let's go. And after she says that, she does the next thing, which is find someone to walk with her through this season of life, in which she got this extremely disrupting. So it says in verse 39, in those days Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah where she entered Zechariah's house.

Remember, that's Elizabeth's husband. And she greeted Elizabeth. Now, you know me, I love my maps. And so because it's easy to think, well, she went to Elizabeth's house. It must have been like a block away. Er, incorrect, not a block away. She's up here in Nazareth, up in the country next to the Sea of Galilee. And to get to Elizabeth's house, it doesn't say it in the text, but most scholars believe that Zechariah lived in a town called Ian Karim, which is four miles west of Jerusalem, because he was a priest, had priestly duties, would have gone into the temple.

And so she is going, depending on her route, if she went through Samaria, which is unlikely, maybe eighty miles if she would have done the Jordan River route to avoid Samaria, you're talking a hundred miles, all kind of terrain, mountains, hills, mountains, tigers, bears, oh my, all the things. And she hurries to do that. She hurries to go see her her her relative,

cousin, whatever she was. And the reason she does this is because she has received deeply disturbing news and should not walk through that season of life alone. And when you receive disruptive news, you should have a impulse, a an immediate impulse, a strong desire.

I don't want to I don't want to do this by myself. Now in the case of Mary she had all kind of other reasons in Deuteronomy chapter 22 verses 23 to 24. It says that if you are betrothed to be married and you get pregnant or you have sex, you get stoned to death. As does your lover boy. And so she probably wanted to leave town for that reason, because, you know, Joseph may be patient and believe me, but I don't know if his dad or mom or preacher is going to be as accommodating.

And then in Matthew 1, verses 18 to 20, it says that Joseph had intended to divorce her secretly. Why was he divorcing her? Maybe he struggled to believe it. You can imagine why he would struggle to believe that. Deep down he knows I don't you don't feel like a cheater. It doesn't feel like you've been unfaithful, but yeah, I'm a man of integrity. I've got to maintain my own reputation. I don't know how to make sense of this and so to save him the public scorn and to save her the embarrassment, I think she tries to get out of town.

But it's also because she needed a friendly face who could understand. And when you're pregnant, you don't get to hide when you're pregnant, right? There's no there's no hide that button, hide your belly. It's there. And so she stays three months with Elizabeth. And it's during that time that the second effort is revealed. Advent joy takes genuine effort to unlock its full potential. It took effort for her intellectually to reason critically, but it also takes effort for her to do the second thing, which is to relate communally. And especially for the introverts in the room of whom I am chief.

To relate to people communally and fellowship and small groups and hanging out and aren't we so glad we're with each other? That can be more challenging for some of us than other people, but it's extremely important. Because you are not meant to live life alone. You're not meant to live life in isolation. That's why we're so key on small groups in our church. And even if you don't join a Sunday morning small group on the official website even if you just get some people your friend your s maybe you're married you get your spouse and your kids or maybe a friend from work and two other colleagues that are from another place and you share interest in other realms, get them together and receive the encouragement that comes from Christian community because if you don't have that, you don't have what you need.

Joy is unlocked through community. And that's one of the reasons we're doing the spiritual growth campaign, bringing on new groups that'll meet for the eight weeks of the campaign. So that more and more people have easy inroads to finding community because through community something miraculous happens. Now what happens for her? Look at the rest of the text in verse 41. When she gets over there, when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, it says

that the baby, John the Baptist, leaped inside of her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. That's amazing.

So just the proximity to Elizabeth spreads the Spirit of God from Mary to Elizabeth. Then she exclaims with a loud cry. The spirit filled revelation from God. Blessed are you, Mary, among women, and your child will be blessed. How could this is amazing, how could this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? If that's not a statement of the deity of Jesus, I don't know what it is. She's saying, God who I worship, Yahweh, is in your womb. How cool is that? That is crazy.

And Mary, I'm sure, was struggling to believe that this was a good thing. That maybe this was a God thing. What do you mean the Son of God's going to come from my womb? And now she's in the proximity of another sister who says, you have no idea how blessed you are. The Holy Spirit reveals to her, the Lord is in your womb. My Lord has come to visit me. You're the mother of the Lord, for you see, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy inside of me.

And then she pronounces a blessing. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill what he has spoken to her. And when Mary hears that, it's like her attitude changes and she busts out in praise and singing to the Lord and Mary said, my soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my Savior. What used to be disruptive news, what used to I didn't understand how God is going to do good out of this. Now I can see because of the encouragement of my sister. God is indeed with me and for me.

And it says she stays with her for three months, which would have been the rest of the duration of the pregnancy. It's verse 56, Luke 1:56. She stayed with her about three months. And then she returned to her home. So we're not talking about one and done. We're not talking about like a quick community. We're talking life on life, fully invested. You know my name, I know your name, you know my struggles, I know your struggles, and in that dynamic of community, God's going to do something profound and unlock joy in my life.

Now how does the Lord do it? It's actually in the text. When you engage in Christian community, three things happen. Number one, you share the Spirit of God with other people. Now I know theologically this is a little thorny because Luke, the gospel writer Luke, talks about the Holy Spirit more than any other gospel writer. Maybe John, their equal, but more than any, Matthew, Mark, Luke is all about the Holy Spirit. And what Luke describes in the Activity of the Holy Spirit, at least during the Gospels, is kind of confusing, and in Acts it's even more confusing.

But the idea is that there's this in-between time where the Spirit of God is kind of coming in and out on particular people. When Jesus rises from the dead, he ascends to the Father, he pours out his Holy Spirit so that today. We receive the Holy Spirit through repentance and

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit fills your heart, gives you for ministry. Jesus baptizes you in the Holy Spirit. It's a one-and-done. You never lose it. It's amazing and great. But the similarity between Luke 1 and our day today is that when you get in community, one of the things that God does through the Holy Spirit that's living inside of you is that it kind of leaks out of you and encourages other people.

And I don't really have words to describe it. It's just a supernatural thing. It's kind of like what I talked about when we sense the presence of the Lord in our worship services. It's a tangible, concrete, Holy Spirit thing. It's something gets shared from the spirit that's in you to the spirit that is in me. And as that spirit is shared, the glory of God and the joy of the Lord is unleashed in your heart, and there's nothing else like it in the world. And you don't get it flying solo.

I'm sorry. You can read great books, you can hear great sermons probably better sermon than you're getting right now on podcasts and those kinds of things, but you can't get the joy of the Lord that comes through community because the Spirit of God is shared. And community. Not only the Spirit shared, the word was spoken. When you get in community, you need to share the Spirit and you need to speak the word, which is why when the scripture says you need to gather together, it doesn't just say gather together. Or, you know, hug another and kiss another and all the different things it says.

One of the things it says is teach and admonish one another. It says sing to one another, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, because in the singing of the word and of the teaching of the word and the exhorting of the word, the word of God gets reaffirmed in your heart and re-established and it's almost like you begin to believe it more strongly, even though you know the lyrics on the page and you believe them theologically when you hear other people singing them. Especially lots of other people singing them, it's like the Holy Spirit says, amen.

Absolutely. It's even more true than you can imagine. And that comes from other believers. So you got to be in community to share the spirit, to speak the word. And then the last thing she does is she celebrates God's work. When she speaks that prophetic word of the mother of my Lord has come to see me Mary can't take it anymore. She's like, well, praise the Lord. You know, that's awesome. I know I didn't see it that way. And now that you're seeing what I wasn't able to see I'm in.

And that's what happens in a small group. I can't tell you the number of times in my own small group where I will see God doing something in the life of another person. And you know, I'm not always the best at explaining everything or being encouraging, but some of sometimes the words that get said to me or the words that I'll say to another person, God uses that to affirm and confirm and celebrate the work of God in that person's life. And you can probably testify to the same thing. That's what happens in community.

The word of God gets spoken, but the work of God gets celebrated. And when you begin to celebrate the work of God in community, the Spirit of God Points people's attention to Jesus and fills our hearts with joy. So you got to think, reason critically, and relate communally. When you do those two things, you'll be you'll be pouring out the effort necessary to experience the fullness of God's joy in your life. The last thing that Mary does is in her song of praise, actually before she sings. And before she visits Elizabeth, it says in chapter 1, verse 38 that Mary says, look, I am the Lord's servant.

May it happen to me as you have said, and the angel left her. Now again, this is Mary all in, right? We don't know if she's happy about it yet, but she's saying, if this is what God wants, I'm a servant of the Lord I don't know how it's going to work. I don't say I'm going to excited about it, but may it happen to me as what the Lord wants. But it's after she gets to visit Elizabeth And she gets reaffirmed in God's calling and work on her life that she burst into song.

And notice the lyrics of her song. Unlocking joy. Mary said, my soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. Because he has looked upon me with favor. I'm sorry, he has looked upon with favor the humble condition of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, because the mighty one has done great things for me, and his name is holy. His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear him. He has done a mighty deed with his arm. He has scattered the proud because of the thoughts of their hearts.

He has toppled the mighty from their thrones. He's exalted the lowly. He satisfied the hungry with good things. He sent the rich away empty, and he has helped his servant Israel, remembering his mercy to Abraham and his descendants forever. Just as he spoke to our ancestors. Well you see Mary do in this hymn of praise is she it's almost as if she totally dies. To herself and her agenda and her plans for her life, and she gets totally consumed with the glory of God through her life as He advances His purposes through the birth of this Son.

And she rejoices in it. She says, I rejoice in God, my Savior. And it's in that consecrating of her life that the joy is unleashed. It's why she's able to say God, you are so glorious. You take proud people and you humble them. You take rich people who think they have everything that they need and you send them away hungry. You take poor people who on the surface from the world standards look like they don't have anything and you fill them with the fullness of yourself. You take the hungry and you satisfy them because you are a God that is that is glorious.

You are such a glorious God. And you will not see that until you resolve in your own heart, I'm living for God's glory and not my own. This is what Jesus always talked about. This is the parable of the great treasure. You guys remember the parable of the great treasure? Guy finds a treasure hidden in a field. When he finds the treasure, he buries it. And then in joy, in

joy, he goes and he sells everything that he has. So that he can buy that field to get that treasure. Why?

Was he so joyful? He was joyfully l letting go of all the other things that used to give him joy in life, because in having the joy of the treasure. It infinitely outweighs any other competing joy in my life. And that is what the kingdom of God is for you and me. If you want the joy of the Lord in your heart, it comes from denying yourself and orienting your life around the glory of God. I know this is a difficult concept. And it's been it's been articulated in various different ways throughout the history of the church.

One of the most popular quotes is from Saint Augustine. He was one of the early church fathers. And he said of human beings that our hearts are restless. One of the reasons we're always hungry and looking for things to satisfy us is because we were created in the image of God, therefore we have a God-shaped hole in our hearts. And we're trying to satisfy that divine vacuum with temporal, non-divine things. And Augustine says it's not until our hearts rest in thee that we can finally rest. He said, my heart's restless until I rest in you.

Well that's talking about joy. The j Augustine would say I don't have true joy unless and until I'm oriented around the glory of God. I died a self and I live for Christ. After Augustine, it was a there's a lot of people. One of them is I named my son Blaise after this guy, Blaise Pascal. Which I'm sorry, Blaise, that you got your name from Blaise Pascal, but he had a tremendous impact on my life as a young guy working through doubt, my own college year, struggling to believe and Blaise Pascal wrote a great apologetic for the existence of God and he said of human beings that the reason we stay so distracted and busy and all of those things is because we're looking to satisfy an infinite longing, but we're doing it with finite things.

So we play pull and we get on social media. He didn't say social media, but I say social media. We distract ourselves because we're trying to satisfy that infinite with the and it said it's not until you satisfy with the infinite and the immutable that the soul finally stops striving after Blaise Pascal, you had a guy named Jonathan Edwards in his religious affections. He says that God is not only to be glorified, but to his glory to be enjoyed. And that when you enjoy the glory of God, then you've unlocked true Christian contentment.

The most popular example, C. S. Lewis, a modern example, he said that God has called us to experience the glory of the ocean. And so many times we're satisfied playing with mud pies on the beach. It's not that our desires are too strong. That's not our problem. Our desires are too weak. God wants to satisfy the deepest of your desires through his glory if you can learn to orient your life around him and not yourself. John Piper said God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

It is in being satisfied in the Lord that God is most preeminently glorified in and through our lives. And that is what Mary is saying. She's saying, I'm so committed to your glory, God. I'm so committed to your agenda. I'm so committed to what you're going to be doing in and through this promised son. That that that my joy is in you and not myself. It's not Joseph. It's not my marriage. It's not being seen in a particular kind of way. My life is committed to your glory. And when you do that you're able to forget about yourself.

And enjoy the fullness of to experience the fullness of joy that God will unlock through that resolution. So you reason critically, you relate to communally, and then you resolve completely. Now how does that get Activated in your life. Same is true of Elizabeth. That was true of Mary. That's true of you and me. True joy is a gift of the Father. That he wants to give to all of us. Salvation is universally offered. I don't think you know God chooses some and doesn't choose others. The offer is universal for whosoever will come.

But the only ones who receive it are those that receive it by faith in the Son. And how is faith exercised in Mary's case? How is faith exercised in Elizabeth's case? It's exercise as a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came on Mary. The Holy Spirit came on Elizabeth The Holy Spirit later comes on Zechariah. And so what I believe this morning is as the Word of God is being preached, that the Spirit of God is using His Word to take some of you and awaken you to the reality of joy.

And maybe if you were honest with yourself, you'd say, I've been looking for joy, I've been trying to find contentment and happiness, but every time I think I found it slips out of my hands. And that's because you've been trying to find it in things other than the promised son. And true joy is only through genuine faith in him as Savior and Lord. And so just as Mary resolved to embrace the Son And the role of God through the Son in her life, the challenge for us this morning is to do the same and receive the fullness of joy through faith in God the Son.

A gift of God the Father, enabled by God the Spirit, received through faith in God the Son. So if you've never received the Lord Jesus by faith this morning, I would encourage you to do so to come and cast your life and to cast your everything into the hands of your heavenly Father who loved you so much he sent his son into the world. To die on the cross for your sins, to forgive you, to reconcile you back to himself, so that not only you could be forgiven, but experience the fullness of joy.

That is available only through him. And so Scholar's going to lead us through a time of response. I want to invite you to come forward. And this altar, this stage can become an altar, and you can externally. If you have a spiritual decision you'd like to make, I'd be happy to receive you and pray with you. The altar is open. You don't have to pray with me if you don't want to. There's other people if I get tied up who will come along and make themselves available to pray with you and for you.

But let's respond to the Lord as he leads. Heavenly Father we thank you for your word. We thank you for your joy, and we thank you that in Jesus Christ all of that comes to fruition, not because we deserve it and not because we earn it. But because you freely give it, if we will just but ask. And so help us this morning to humble our hearts, to repent of our sin. To see the truth of your word and to receive it into our hearts with gladness and great joy. And so teach us to respond in a way that will unlock that.

And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to take a few moments to respond. The altar's open as the Lord leads. You can also scan the QR code if you'd rather do it that way. Let's respond to the Lord. As you continue responding to the Lord, I want to remind us that that repentance is not just an individual action. And faith is not just something we demonstrate personally. Faith is also something that we do corporately. Repentance is something that we can do corporately. And so would you ask the Lord if as a church family we have if we've displayed the joy of the Lord.

That is evident in Mary's life. And that where the joy of the Lord is missing or absent, that the Holy Spirit would help us corporately as a church family. To receive it and to display it so that people might be drawn to the source of that joy, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, the world is full of miserable people. And sadly, the world is full of miserable Christians. Who have just allowed fear and suffering to harden their hearts and to blind their eyes to the amazing gift of joy that is available through your Son.

And we know you don't promise us a trouble-free life. We know that sometimes joy takes effort to unlock. But we want to be a people marked by that kind of courage and faith and obedience and diligence and endurance, not just for our sake, but for your glory. Not to us, but to your name. Be the glory, Lord. And would you do that not just in us personally, as we individually respond, but that you would mark Broadview Baptist church as a house of joy. That you would mark the people of Broadview Church as people who say with the psalmist, better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.

In your presence is the fullness of joy. So we don't live for money. We don't live for fame. We don't live for achievement. We live for the glory of God. We live for the presence of God. And we externally demonstrate that through our commitment to worship. Sunday morning, but also every day of the week. And so would you help us to be that church, that bright, shining city on a hill that cannot be hidden. Cannot be turned down or turned off because the joy of the Lord is our strength. And would you help us to do that until you come again in glory?

And make our joy complete through the restoration of all things and the healing of what has been broken on this side of heaven. And we pray these things in Jesus' name, and God's people said. Amen.