

Sermon Discussion Guide

12.17.23 Message | Keith Ehresman | Luke 2:1-7

Key Scripture:

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

- Luke 2:1-7

“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. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.”

- Luke 2:39-47

Message Highlights:

- This message comes from the vantage point of Mary and Elizabeth. One before her time, one past her child-bearing years; the Lord is never done, and he is always preparing you for what's next.
- Keith highlights this question: Do we have enough humility to accept whatever God has for us?
- When we dwell richly with scripture, our response will be praise, and naturally, the words of scripture will come from our lips.
- Question to ponder: What is your life-changing lyric?

CONVERSATION STARTER

Tell about a time you had to trust someone in an unexpected situation.

DISCUSS THE MESSAGE

How has the Spirit spoken to you through this section of God's Word?

THINK DEEPER (Does your group understand the passage?)

- Consider the humble circumstances of Jesus' birth in a stable. What does this reveal about Mary's humility and the nature of Jesus' earthly beginnings?
- Consider Elizabeth's exclamation, "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." How does Mary's belief in God's promise contribute to the theme of joy in this passage?
- Discuss Elizabeth's words, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." How does this recognition foreshadow the unique role Mary is chosen for in God's plan?
- Explore the recurring themes of humility and blessing in Mary's and Elizabeth's responses. How do these themes align with broader biblical concepts, and what can we learn from them?

THINK LIFE CHANGE (Does your group recognize the personal implications for them as individuals?)

- How does Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem reflect obedience to God's plan? How does this relate to our own journeys of obedience?
- Consider the joy Elizabeth and her unborn child expressed in response to Mary's visit. How does this highlight the joy of being in God's presence? How can we cultivate joy in our own spiritual journeys?
- Elizabeth acknowledges Mary's belief in the fulfillment of God's promises. How does Mary's trust in God's spoken word inspire us to trust God's promises for our lives?
- Notice the Holy Spirit's presence in Elizabeth's response. How does the Holy Spirit play a role in our spiritual journeys and in bringing about life change?

THINK ENGAGE (Does your group recognize the communal implications for us as a Gospel-centered community?)

- Explore the idea of trusting in God's timing in everyday life. Can you share an instance where you saw God's timing unfold in unexpected ways? How can this be used as a testimony for Jesus with the community of God?

THINK EXPAND (Does your group recognize the missional implications for those we want to reach for Christ?)

- Explore the idea of embracing humility in relationships. How can humility foster deeper connections and understanding between individuals?
- Discuss the themes of humility and gratitude in Mary's circumstances. How can we cultivate a spirit of magnifying God in our daily lives and interactions with others?

THINK KINGDOM (Does your group understand the overarching Kingdom, that the work we do is bigger than ourselves?)

- In what ways does the humble setting of Jesus' birth emphasize God's Kingdom coming in unexpected ways and places?
- Consider the role of the Holy Spirit in the larger Kingdom context. How does the Holy Spirit contribute to the broader community and the global impact of God's Kingdom?
- How can you show the Lord an appreciation for his presence, even when your circumstances are not ideal?