

The Holy Spirit Gives Power to Praise
3rd Sunday of Advent 2003

Text: Luke 1:39-45

The Holy Spirit gives Power to Praise! – Say it with me....

Background:

The Angel Gabriel leaves the presence of God to come to earth to bring two messages to two people. One is a Levitical Priest and one is young and unknown.

He appears 1st to Zechariah who was burning incense in the Holy Place to announce that his wife who was well along in years was going to conceive a child. *The angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth".* Sadly, his answer "how can I be sure of this"? Gets him trouble with the God's messenger and Gabriel closes Zechariah's mouth for his unbelief!

Ladies: how many of you are thinking right now "Gee, I wish Gabriel would come and pay my husband a visit and zip his mouth shut"?

In fact, if you recall back in Gen 18 when the three Angels visited Abraham and Sarah to announce the birth of Isaac. Verse 12 says; *So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"*

The way I see it, Zechariah and Sarah get the "blond of the year award"!

So Zechariah goes home unable to say a word.

The Angel Gabriel appears for the 2nd time to Mary to announce that she will give birth to the Son of God *"The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.*

So Mary answers, "I am the Lords servant".

THE TEXT: Luke 1:39-45

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "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!"

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Luke wants us to notice two things from this small piece of scripture. The 1st is to understand Mary's desire to see the wonders of God. She doesn't hang around her house, but hurries to her relative. Mary is the type of woman who puts her faith into action. She not only says, "Lord, your will be done", but she also "hurries" to see God at work in the life of her relative Elizabeth. The journey to Judea that Mary undertook was not a simple drive to the next town; it was a difficult journey that would have taken at least three days at that time. Mary did not let that stop her from going to Elizabeth, rejoicing with her, and praising the Lord for fulfilling his promises. The 2nd is the active role the Holy Spirit plays when God comes to visit earth.

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Lets look at the text:

Mary enters Zechariah's house, she looks at him funny because he doesn't say a word (wonder why?) she greets Elizabeth when all of a sudden the baby begins to flip out in the Elizabeth's womb! Ladies, you can relate to this...

Story of when Paige was pregnant with Jessica:

So why does the baby go bonkers? < HE HAS THE POWER TO PRAISE! >

Look at V.15 *He will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.*

The moment the baby hears Mary's greeting he leaps for joy and his mother is filled with the Holy Spirit! Luke wants us to see 2 points of interest.

I. Elizabeth's 3 Statements: V.42, 43 & 45

- a. *"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"*
- b. *"But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"*
- c. *"Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"*

II. The Holy Spirit's revelation to Elizabeth

The Holy Spirit's role in this moment of time is to reveal to Elizabeth:

- a. Mary is blessed among all women.
- b. Mary's child is blessed.
- c. Mary's child is her Lord!
- d. To reassure young Mary because she believed what the Lord spoke will be accomplished!

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Have you been watching the news regarding Christmas?

Listen to What Bill O' Reilly says

. I'm getting very, very tired of the Christian bashers. And I think most Americans of all faiths are with me on this.

Wednesday night, I debated former New York City mayoral candidate **Mark Green** the fact that in the city's public schools, you can display a Menorah for Hanukkah, a Muslim flag for Ramadan, **but you are forbidden to display the nativity scene in honor of the federal holiday Christmas**. Now Mr. Green's a smart, stand up guy, but he couldn't explain the policy except to say that the Christian majority was not entitled to see its symbols in a public place. Yet the Jewish and Muslim minorities are? Does that make any sense? No, it does not.

Christmas honors the birth of Jesus Christ, whom you can see either as a God or as a philosopher whose concepts of loving your neighbor have shaped civilization. In 1870, when Congress voted Christmas a federal holiday, the intent was to honor the birth of Jesus because of his contributions to the American spirit.

These anti-Christian zealots taking Judeo-Christian philosophy today reject that honor. But in reality, they are cowards. They hide behind the bogus separation of church and state argument to batter any public displays they find offensive, even if those displays are general and not designed to promote a specific religion. Led by the **ACLU** and aided by secular judges, these anti-Christian Americans are insulting a key part of America. The Judeo-Christian tradition of respect for others. And I'm angry. The courts are being used to persecute the majority in this country. It is wrong and it must be stopped. As for the anti-Christian forces, I issue a challenge. Stop sneaking around and step up. Petition Congress to repeal the federal holiday of Christmas. Take your misguided fight to the legislative branch instead of using corrupt judges, who have no right to make the law. Do any of you think that our leaders in Washington will vote against the Christmas holiday? Let's find out. We're a nation of laws. If a Christmas display violates a law, let the lawmakers be heard. What say you, ACLU?

Or what about this... The U.S. Supreme Court soon will decide whether the words "under God" will be removed from the Pledge of Allegiance

Let me ask you something:

If the world said no Christmas, what would you do?

If the world took "In God We Trust" off our money, what would do?

If the world took said you could no longer go to church, what would you do?

You know what?

Go ahead – take the words "In God We Trust" off our money

Go ahead – Don't allow Christmas songs in our schools, or Nativity displays, or candy canes, or anything else that points to Christmas! Will it affect your relationship with Jesus Christ??

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This morning I heard a story on the radio of a woman who was out Christmas shopping with her two children. After many hours of looking at row after row of toys and everything else imaginable, after hours of hearing both her children asking for everything they saw on those many shelves, she finally made it to the elevator with her two kids. She was feeling what so many of us feel during the holiday season time of the year. Overwhelming pressure to go to every party, every housewarming, Taste all the holiday food and treats, getting that perfect gift for every single person on our shopping list, making sure we don't forget anyone on our card list, and the pressure of making sure we respond to everyone who sent us a card. Finally the elevator doors opened and there was already a crowd in the car. She pushed her way into the car and dragged her two kids in with her and all the bags of stuff. When the doors closed she couldn't take it anymore and stated, "Whoever started this whole Christmas thing should be found, strung up and shot." From the back of the car everyone heard a quiet calm voice respond,

"Don't worry we already crucified him." For the rest of the trip down the elevator it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

You see, Christmas is about the greatest gift ever given!

- God loved His creation so much he became a man to live among us (John 1:14)
- Jesus has given us His Spirit to live inside us (Eph 1:13)
- Jesus came to take our sin, shame, pride, foul mouth, lust and all the other abominations man does in God sight to the cross – He took my place and yours when he went to this cross – why?? So we will be with Him forever as he planned from the very beginning.

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Close with 1 Peter 1: 3-9