

“The Leap of Joy” Luke 1:39-56 Rorate Coeli 2025

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus who is the Christ. Amen

Our gospel lesson this blessed day is the story of two pregnant women, Mary and Elizabeth, Mary who was pregnant with baby Jesus and Elizabeth who was pregnant with John who later was called, John the Baptist. Mary went to see Elizabeth after she found out from the angel she was carrying God’s son. Mary, I imagine, had to find someone to talk with to help her sort out all that had happened to her. She greeted Elizabeth and the text says, "and when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb. .." further the text says, as Elizabeth is speaking, "For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. "

Elizabeth knew the glory, the honour which God bestowed upon Mary so she says, "Blessed are you among women. ." Mary has been honoured through out the generations for her special privilege of being chosen by God to bring his message of love, his sign of love, his incarnation of love into this world. Some of the honor, some of the glory that has been bestowed upon Mary has been lost in this modern time. In the churches of the protest, the Protestant churches, Mary has not been looked at with any high honour or glory. In Lutheranism, even though Luther throughout his lifetime held Mary’s place as special, as honoured, it seems we have ignored her special task, her special calling as God’s special handmaiden. In this very beautiful passage from scripture, in which Mary knows and acknowledges that God has chosen her because He wanted too, not because of anything she did, this passage has been ignored in many of our churches.

As one studies this passage closely, one finds it is Mary’s humble song of praise to God for being chosen by God so that God’s power of love, mercy and forgiveness may be manifested in this world. This is not a passage which praised

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Mary, but a passage in which Mary praises God for allowing her to be the bearer of this great news, This whole account in today’s gospel lesson is a scripture of joy at the impending good news of God as we await the birth of the Babe in that stable. Our hearts are as one with the babe as we leap for joy, as we lift our hearts to heaven, as we await the Christmas joy, God’s personal message of love God’s own son being born into this world.

Today, as we feel the joy, the celebration, the excitement of this text, we will see why this leap of joy has been experienced throughout the ages in all hearts as the fulfillment of the prophets came true that night in the stable

There is a leap for joy because through the Christmas event we find that all things are possible with God. The virgin birth is a sign for us that God can , when he wants to, puts aside the laws of nature, the natural order of thing to do his mighty will. Mary understood this greatness of God, Mary knew that God had done something great. Mary knew that her glory came not from anything she did or didn’t do, but her glory came from God himself. She knew and understood hers was a borrowed glory, a glory bestowed upon her from God. So she says in that passage called the Magnificat, " My soul magnifies the lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." God had accomplished something truly special with Mary and Mary gave Him the praise and the glory.

Not only did God reveal his power with Mary, but in the place of his Son’s birth God showed us his humility. For who would have guessed that God being born into this world would break into our history in such a backwater town as Bethlehem in a humble place as a stable. But with God all things are possible so our hearts leap with joy. God does not need what we consider grand and glorious. God can use the simple, the common to show us his glory. So it is fitting, I think, that Jesus the Son of

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God was born in such a small town in a tiny country and born in such a unlikely place as a stable. It shows us the true nature of this God we worship.

Who would have thought that a baby, would bring such changes into this world? Who would have thought that from a man dying on a cross, life would be given to those who believe, life for eternity?? Who would have believed that God could raise Jesus from that tomb?? But he did and because he did, death has lost its sting for those who believe in God’s power. Our hearts do leap for joy because indeed with God all things are possible. A changed life is possible as God forms, shapes and molds those lives which are turned over to his mighty hands.

Our lives leap for joy at the impending Christmas event because of the gift of hope which the baby in the manger brings to our lives. There is a hopefulness about life because of Christ. No matter what the circumstances in which we find ourselves, there can be hope because of Christ. Hope that says somehow we will be delivered, rescued, or given the courage and strength to endure any circumstance in which we might find ourselves.

The hope of Christmas says no matter how desperate our lives seem, no matter how much hurt, brokenness, and alienation there is, because of Jesus there is hope. We as God’s children are more than horses being shot when our usefulness in life is through. Because of Christ, no life should be without hope. There is hope for the redemption of that life either through the strength to endure or the power to overcome. Because of Christ, in the long run of things, in each life, hope does spring eternal. Christ can do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves that is to redeem our lives now and in the future. Because of Christ, no life need end in a moment of despair, for with Christ every life can be and will be redeemed.

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A Sunday School teacher gave each of her students, a plastic egg before Easter to be brought back with something, which tells of the joy of Easter. One brought back an egg filled with a stone, another a flower, another a butterfly and one with nothing in it. The boy explained, it is empty just as the tomb on Easter was empty.

A couple of months later, that boy who had brought the empty egg to class was killed in a car accident. On his coffin among the flowers were plastic eggs all opened all empty.

Our hearts do leap for joy this season because with God, all things are possible. Our hearts do leap for joy because of the gift of the baby born in the manger who brings hope into our troubled lives.

Leap for joy... because our Savior comes. Amen