



Sunday Teaching Guide

Advent, Week 3

December 17, 2023

Bible Texts

- Luke 1:26-55
- Galatians 4:4-5

Important Terms

- Advent: This comes from the Latin word “Adventus”, which means coming or visiting.”

Sermon Notes

- This birth announcement from Mary is full of joy, excitement, and hope, but it also reveals a connection to something beyond the joy of becoming a parent. Mary revealed her understanding that the baby in her womb was who the angel promised. One writer says that with the Mary’s song, called the Magnificat, “Mary not only announces a birth, she announces the inauguration of a new kingdom, one that stands in stark contrast to every other kingdom—past, present, and future—that relies on violence and exploitation to achieve “greatness.” With the Magnificat, Mary declares that God has indeed chosen sides. And it’s not with the powerful, but the humble.”
- By God sending Jesus, we find our way into this story. We are a part of God’s family. Therefore, Christmas story is not only the miraculous birth announcement of Jesus, but is an invitation to experience our own rebirth and discover that, through Jesus, God was reestablishing a relationship with us, his children, who have a Heavenly Father waiting for you to join Him in what He is doing in this world.
- Mary was young woman who, based on her culture, shouldn’t have been having a child. She was a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph. Most people didn’t see a miracle in her pregnancy, they saw disgrace. But Mary knew. From the lowly manger, to the cross, to the empty tomb, Mary knew. Mary was given the gift of being chosen to be the mother of Jesus. Mary’s song is not just a song celebrating her gift of becoming a mother but of Mary recognizing God was doing something incredible.

Reflection Questions

- What has been your experience with birth announcements?
- Do any of Mary’s words or sentences stand out to you?
- How do you think the words of her song compare to what your reaction would be?
- Do you think Mary’s feelings about her pregnancy varied from day to day (time period to time period)?
- Why do you think Luke wanted to include the Magnificat in his telling of the story of Jesus? In other words, what is so important about the Magnificat?
- How do you think Mary’s experience compares to the experience of other women hearing about their own pregnancy? What are similarities and differences?
- How has your understanding of the importance of Christmas changed over time?

Prayer for the Week

- We seek the mighty God in the most unlikely places as a child in a stable, and in an empty tomb Give us ears to hear, O God, and eyes to watch, that we may know your presence in our midst during this holy season of joy as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Micah 5:2-5a
- Psalm 80:1-7
- Hebrews 10:5-10