

## *God's Upside-Down Economy*

Luke 1:39-56

*The Great Reversal*



- Advent is the time to reflect on God's indescribable gift of Jesus (2 Corinthians 9:15)
- The theological theme of the incarnation: God made flesh
- Advent runs four weeks leading up to Christmas day

## *The Visitation*

Luke 1:39-40

## *Mary*

- A young girl of about 16 years, expecting a child
- Conceived in a mysterious way through the power of the Holy Spirit

## *The Reunion*

- Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, her older cousin, who is also with child - an emotionally charged connection & meeting
- Mary stays with Elizabeth for about 3 months (v56)
- What would this time be like for both Mary & Elizabeth

## *Elizabeth*

Luke 1:41-45

## *Body & Heart*

- Elizabeth's body leads the way to her heart (v41) – she hears Mary's greeting & her baby leaps in her womb
- A leap to the presence of Mary with child (v41b)

## *Elizabeth's Response*

- A wholistic response to the Spirit of God
- Mind, body, spirit
- Experienced in both prayer and praise

## *Her Confession of Faith*

- Three-fold use of 'Blessed are you' (v42,45)
- She recognizes that Mary is chosen by God
- She recognizes Mary's unborn child as 'my Lord' (v43)

## *Our Capacity of Faith*

- Faith is what the world needs most
- Our over commitment to utility and efficiency undermines our spiritual reliance on faith, trust & confidence in God

## *Mary's Magnificat*

Luke 1:46-56

## *Beginning with Praise*

- Mary's song begins with praise as does the Lord's Prayer
- 'My soul magnifies the Lord'; 'my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour' (v46,47)
- She begins with adoration as is fitting in our conversations with God

## *Lowliness*

- Mary recognizes her own lowliness (v48) – a word of marginalization
- It recognizes her own spiritual poverty & reliance on God
- She has been chosen from unfavourable circumstances for the mission of God

## *Our Standing Before God*

- Each of us in our ordinary lives, used by God in extraordinary ways
- Each of us have gifts that are to be weaved into the tapestry of God

## *God's Character is Praised*

Luke 1:50-55

## *Mercy*

- God's mercy is demonstrated to those who are in relationship with him (v50)
- God's mercy is connected to his promises (v54-55) – promises which are now revealed in Jesus

## *Our Invitation*

- Trust in God's word – let his word fund our lives
- It becomes our soul food – read and receive his word

## *God's Strength*

- God brings down the proud & powerful
- He lifts up the lowly (v52)
- The hungry are filled and the rich are sent away empty (v53)

## *The Great Reversal*

- Mary's song emphasizes this perspective on God
- Those with faith & trust in God are elevated
- Those who are proud & reject God are brought down

## *From Scarcity to Abundance*

- From competition to generosity – there is enough for all to have what is needed
- It is an act of justice-making

What God has done for Mary anticipates and models what God will do for the poor, the powerless, and the oppressed of the world, the central theme of the second movement of the song, the triumph of God's purposes for all people everywhere.

Fred B. Craddock

## *Going Forward*

## *An Invitation to Trust*

- Mary's song invites us to maintain our trust in God
- The themes of mercy, strength & the promises of God continue for us
- He will act for us – the Beatitudes (Luke 6:20-26) declare that God's kingdom is presently available for us

## *Justice-Making*

- Part of our work & witness is to promote the love of God in our world
- How can we advocate for the hurting & powerless?

## *Spiritual Waiting*

- Mary & Elizabeth model the capacity for spiritual waiting – they wait together for 3 months (birth of John)
- Advent is about waiting & learning to depend on the Spirit of God