

The Festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
St. Luke 1:39-56
July 2nd, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Blessed Is the Fruit of Thy Womb

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“And it came to pass, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said, ‘Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? For behold, when the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends, the Blessed Virgin Mary’s visit to St. Elisabeth is rife with impossibilities. Neither of them is supposed to be able to be pregnant. One is old and barren; way past the age of being able to bear children. The other is a virgin, so young she has not even “known” a man. And yet, they both are pregnant. Elisabeth is pregnant with perhaps the second most important person of all time: St. John the Baptist, whom our Lord + Jesus calls the greatest of those born of women. The Blessed Virgin Mary carries in her womb *the* most important Person ever born: our Lord and Savior, the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Our Lord has already been conceived. He is only a few days old in the womb. St. John the Baptist is already six months old in the womb. Yet, while they are still in the womb, these two cousins are communicating. The Lord + Jesus is preaching through the voice of St. Mary’s Greeting. And St. John the Baptist is already preparing the way of the Lord. From inside his mother Elisabeth’s womb St. John the Baptist hears the greeting of his Lord’s mother to his own mother and leaps for joy. And through the voice of his mother, being full of the Holy Ghost, prophesies: “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb! ...Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.”

That is obviously true for the Blessed Virgin Mary. She believed what the Lord told her through the angel Gabriel. Indeed, just as the angel said, she was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost and the Only-Begotten Son of the Father was conceived in her womb, without the aid of a man, and without violating her virginity. The Blessed Virgin Mary was blessed by giving birth to her own Savior.

St. Elisabeth prophesies concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary that she is blessed for believing that the Word of God is true. Unlike her husband Zacharias, who questioned the angel Gabriel and did not believe that such a thing as a child in his, and his wife’s, old age was something possible, even

though the Lord God was proclaiming it to be true. We are also blessed when we believe what God says; when we trust God's Word. Blessed is he that believes what the Lord has said to him will be accomplished. Of course, we are too often just like Zacharias, unable to believe that the promises of God are for us, and that we already possess them.

Consider what the Lord + Jesus has said to you. He has said: "You are Mine. I gave you My Name when you were baptized into My Name—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I claimed you as My own. I called you My child." He has also said: "I forgive you all your sins." He has also said: "Take, eat this is My Body; Drink ye all of it, this is My Blood shed for you, for the remission of all your sins." He has told us that He is the Vine, and we are the branches when He said, "I am in you, and you are in Me. I am with you always." He has said: "I love you and I lay down My life for you." "I have made you My own, and 'no one shall pluck you from My Hand.'" He has said: "You are my beloved child, perfect and without sin, spotless and blameless and the gates of Hell shall not overcome you on account of what I have done for you." But, we too often either doubt these words, or worse, we gloss over them as if they are just words on a page and have no real meaning for us and for our lives. These are the promises that our Lord + Jesus would have us hear. These are the promises that are impossible, but the Lord God makes them possible, just as He gave children to two women who should not be pregnant by all reason and science.

If He can make such things possible; give a child to a barren woman and a child to a virgin, then He can fulfill His promises to you. Your sins have been paid. You do have salvation. You will inherit Heaven and an eternal life with all the saints and angels while possessing a new and glorious body in the day of the resurrection of all the dead. These are the words that are proclaimed to you. Believe them! They are true. They are meant for your ears. Just as the Blessed Virgin Mary's greeting was meant for the ears of St. John the Baptist, which caused him to leap for joy in the womb of His mother St. Elisabeth. The Blessed Virgin Mary even ran with haste to give that greeting, just as the Holy Ghost comes to us with haste to take away our hard heart and give us a heart of faith that believes on the Lord + Jesus and all that He has done for us.

What is even more impossible than two women who should not be able to be pregnant, is who these two women are. Neither one is of any great importance. They were not queens or princesses. They were not rich or famous. They were unknowns. They were common women. St. Elisabeth was the wife of a priest, and the Blessed Virgin Mary was a simple handmaiden. But, our Lord chooses the weak and the lowly of this world to perform His great marvels and wonders. He chooses the impossible to do what only He can make possible.

So too, are the places of His birth and where He grew up. Bethlehem and Nazareth were backwater villages of no reputation, no strategic value, no abundance of natural resources. And yet, today there are scarcely any places so famous. The Virgin Mary and St. Elisabeth were nobodies. But God elevated them to a great position. Countless women and girls bear their names today. Thousands upon thousands have called St. Mary blessed for the Savior Whom she bore. So too, does our Lord God notice us and make us worthy on account of the works and merits of His Beloved Only-Begotten Son. We are also nobody of any importance, just like St. Mary and St. Elisabeth. However, the Lord God Who is not far from us, Who is present with us at all times in His Word, loves and knows us so closely and personally that every hair on our head is counted. He notices us. He is interested in us. He cares for us. He gives us forgiveness, life, and salvation on account of His Son. And, His angels rejoice over our repentance and faith. They leap for joy. His words of comfort and promise to us are not empty vanities or mindless flattery. They are words that are, and will be, fulfilled, just as sure as the barren woman bore a son, and the Virgin bore a Son.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us give thanks on this day of the festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for she believed that which was spoken of her, and she went with haste to her

relative Elisabeth in the hill country. She confirmed the Word of the Lord God even further, saying that the fruit of womb of the Blessed Virgin is blessed. Our Lord + Jesus, the fruit of her womb, is blessed, and He in turn blesses us with forgiveness, life, and salvation. For He does not choose the high and mighty, the rich and famous, but He chooses a lowly handmaiden, and a barren woman to both prepare the way of the Lord and be that Way to salvation from sin and death. This means that He chooses even us poor, miserable sinners. For in contrition and faith we cling to Him and His promises of life and salvation. Let us continue to cling to Him in faith, and He will exalt us to the gates of Heaven in due time. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!