

Humbly Glorify the Lord

2018-12-23 - Year C - Advent 4 - The Rev. Christopher M. Klukas

Micah 5:2–5a; Psalm 80:1–7; Hebrews 10:1–10; Luke 1:39–56

- Cousins! What a joy it is to see cousins playing together.
- Recent visit from my brother
- Joseph and Eli are just about the same age
- Mary and Elizabeth were kinswomen, members of the same extended family.
- The Lord speaks to each of them (through angels and the Holy Spirit) of the pregnancy of the other, and in today's gospel lesson they meet.

Jealousy

- One remarkable thing about this story is that there is no hint of jealousy in Elizabeth.
- Elizabeth was old and had been unable to conceive.
 - In this way her story reminds of us Sarah, the wife of Abraham, in the Old Testament and of the child that God gave her in her old age.
- Earlier in this chapter it says that Elizabeth “kept herself hidden” for five months before telling others of her pregnancy.
 - This means that she had just made her happy announcement a month before Mary shows up.
- Elizabeth could have been jealous.
 - She could have seen Mary as stealing her thunder.
 - She could have been jealous that Mary was chosen to bear the Son of God whereas she was chosen to be the mother of his forerunner.
- Instead of jealousy, we see joy!
- Elizabeth was overjoyed to be a mother, and content with her circumstances and this allowed her to have joy for Mary too.

Pride

- Equally remarkable is Mary's lack of pride at being chosen to be the mother of the Lord.
- You can imagine the range of emotions that Mary must have had after hearing the news from Gabriel.
 - She was young, was she ready to be a mother?
 - She was unmarried but engaged, what would her fiance, Joseph, think? What would the people in town think? Would they try to stone her?
 - She was probably poor.
 - Despite her circumstances, I could see it being easy to slip into pride. God chose *me for this!*
 - “And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38, ESV).
 - Servant, doule, literally means servant or slave.

- When we put ourselves in this place, we have a proper orientation towards God.
 - Jesus said that when we humble ourselves, we allow God to lift us up (Luke 14:10-11)
- Why does God choose a humble, poor, unmarried woman to be the mother of Jesus?
 - God wanted to identify with the poor, with people who knew they needed him.
- Mary continues this theme of humility in her song, the *Magnificat*.
 - She doesn't proclaim her own greatness, she proclaimed the "greatness of the Lord" (HCSB, v. 46). She "magnifies" the Lord (glorify, exalt, magnify).
 - She praises God because he has looked on her humble estate and has done great things for her (vv. 48-49).
- Then she turns outward and recognizes the significance of this not just for her but for all people.
 - vv. 51-43.
 - When we are proud in our own strength and ability, we leave no room for God to work in our lives and demonstrate his power.
 - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Belief

- Elizabeth says "blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45, ESV).
 - God always keeps his promises. He demonstrates this over and over in the scriptures.
 - God wants us to trust him. To put our faith in him. And to believe him when he tells us that he is about to do great things.
 - Even when, especially when, it seems like the great things he promises are impossible.
- Gabriel says "Nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).
- What are the impossible barriers in your life right now.
- Where do you need to see the power, salvation, healing, and provision of God.
- Quiet yourself before the Lord. Listen for his voice.
 - Believe what he tells you!