

Lk1:39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,

1:40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

1:41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

1:42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

1:43 "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

1:44 "For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

1:45 "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

1:46 And Mary said:"My soul magnifies the Lord,

1:47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

1:48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

1:49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me,And holy is His name.

1:50 And His mercy is on those who fear HimFrom generation to generation.

1:51 He has shown strength with His arm;He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

1:52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones,And exalted the lowly.

1:53 He has filled the hungry with good things,And the rich He has sent away empty.

1:54 He has helped His servant Israel,In remembrance of His mercy,

1:55 As He spoke to our fathers,To Abraham and to his seed forever."

1:56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

1:57 Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son.

1:58 When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

[From today's sermon.

Next week is Christmas. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

How many times does the word "joy" appear in today's passage? John the Baptist, as befits one who bears witness to the Lord, is twice described in the Bible as leaping in his mother's womb with extraordinary joy, leaping in her belly as soon as he heard the voice of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Mary also saw this and said, "My soul praises the Lord, and my spirit praises God my Savior,"

which means, “My soul, myself, my deepest being, my inner life, magnifies, stretches, extends the Lord. It means that my whole being feels God as a greater being than ever before, as a near help. And my soul, my inner life, my state of mind, is said to rejoice exceedingly because of my Savior, my Redeemer, and my Guide.

Praise and rejoice in the Lord. This is to rejoice and be glad in the knowledge that the Lord is more full of mercy and compassion than ever before, and to rejoice and be glad in the most extreme, most joyful way.

Grace and mercy are worked by God into our whole being, into our inner life, into our deepest hearts. That is Christmas.

Good morning everyone. Following last Sunday, we have another snowy morning today. Yesterday morning was white, but today is even more so. It seems like it snows every weekend these days.

There have been more and more years lately where it hasn't been a snowy Christmas. And this year, the weather has been like a continuous summer, but the snow is coming early. However, I hope everyone will take care of yourselves in the midst of winter.

Finally, next week is Christmas. Today's scripture reminds us what a joyous event Christmas is.

1:39 In those days Mary stood up and went with great haste to a mountain village and went to a city of Judah,

1:40 And she went into the house of Zacharias and greeted Elisabeth.

1:41 And when Elisabeth heard Mary's greeting, her child was conceived, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,

1:42 And she cried aloud, saying, Blessed art thou, O woman, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

1:43 What an honor it is that the mother of the Lord has come to me!

1:44 See! When the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the child was in her womb, dancing with joy.

This is indeed John who was called as a prophet to testify of the Lord Jesus. When Elizabeth heard the voice of Mary, the mother of Jesus, she danced with joy from within her mother's

womb.

This event is also written from the mouth of his mother Elisabeth in verse 44,

1:44 Look! When the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the child danced for joy in her womb.

The joy referred to here refers to extreme, extreme, extreme, extreme, intense, extreme, extreme, beyond, thorough, and extreme joy.

John exploded with such joy from within his mother's womb, jumping for joy even as a baby. This was truly unusual. This was truly unusual, because something extraordinary had happened. It was the birth of Jesus. That is Christmas.

1:45 How blessed is the woman who believed that what the Lord had spoken would be fulfilled!

Even though older births are rare, such things as virgin births are something that medical science cannot even begin to comprehend. Mary believed in the incomprehensible and incomprehensible.

How could this be? was a positive question, asking how it could happen.

The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will cover you. The angel said, "There is nothing that God cannot do. May it be done to me according to your word. Believe in God's work. Believe in the Word. When we do so, things will come to pass according to the Word. What a blessing it is to believe in such a powerful and faithful Word of God!

1:46 And Mary said, "Praise the Lord, my soul; praise Him!

1:47 And my spirit will praise God my Savior.

1:48 He has taken even this lowly woman into his heart. From now on, and from generation to generation, they will call me a wretched woman,

1:49 For he that is mighty has done great things to me. 1:49 For a mighty man hath done great things unto me: his name is good,

1:50 His mercy endureth from generation to generation, to them that fear him.

1:51 He exerts his might with his arm, and scatters those whose hearts are puffed up with pride,

1:52 He withdraweth the mighty from their thrones, and raiseth up the lowly,

1:53 He satisfies the hungry with good things, and sends the rich home hungry.

1:54 The LORD has not forgotten his mercy, but has helped his servant Israel,

1:55 As he had promised to have mercy on Abraham our fathers and on their descendants for ever.

Zacharias, though a priest, could not believe that God's words were spoken through His angel. He said, "How could I know such a thing? I am an old man, and my wife is old.

He had decided in his own mind that such a thing was impossible in his situation, and that no matter how much God might be, He could not possibly do something that he could not think of in his own mind. But we are only human beings, creatures created by God. To the One who created the entire world out of nothing, the One who created all life out of nothing, what can we complain just because we do not understand?

But Mary, a young girl from a cold village, was always longing for God's salvation. So, even though she was nervous, she saw in this word comfort and salvation for her own country, even though her ordinary life with her fiancée was disturbed by the suddenness of the child being given to her.

1:32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

1:33 He will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his dominion will be unlimited.

Mary, like Simeon and Anna, must also have longed for the salvation of God's people. Otherwise, she could not have spoken such a beautiful and powerful hymn.

1:46 And Mary said, "Praise the Lord, my soul; praise Him!

1:47 My spirit praiseth God the Savior.

Praise the Lord. This means to magnify or extend the Lord. My Tamashii refers to myself, the deepest part of my heart, my inner life. From the deepest place, with my whole being, pouring out my life, I greatly magnify God and extend Him before my eyes. This is the beginning of Mary's hymn.

And my spirit, which also means inner life, the state of my heart, I say to you in the deepening of my heart, is in unusual and extreme joy, she says. Why is this? Because God is my Savior, my Redeemer, my rescuer who leads me out.

1:48 He has taken even this lowly woman into His heart. From now on, from generation to

generation, people will say, "Woe to me!"

1:49 For the Mighty One has done great things for me. 1:49 For a mighty man hath done great things unto me: his name is good,

1:50 And his mercy endureth for ever and ever unto them that fear him.

Mary is praised by Elizabeth for her faith, but rather than explaining her feelings to her, she expresses her passionate gratitude and praise to God, as if exploding.

She is pleased that God has paid attention to someone of such lowly status, even though she despises herself as a lowly woman. But she does not mean to say that she is a redeemer and has been singled out for special attention. It was a joy that God had given attention to a weak person like them.

1:51 The LORD exercises his power with his arm and scatters those who are puffed up with the pride of their hearts,

1:52 He withdraws the powerful from their thrones, and raises up the lowly,

1:53 He satisfies the hungry with good things, and sends the rich home hungry.

1:54 The LORD has not forgotten his mercy, but has helped his servant Israel,

1:55 As he had promised to have mercy on Abraham our fathers and on their descendants for ever.

The Kingdom of God was ruined and desolate. No one interceded for God's mercy, and those in power thought only of themselves. It was her greatest joy that God would send a special person who would succeed to David's throne through her and carry out a merciful reign forever in order to revive God's ruined nation. The fact that God had thought of us to such an extent was beyond her imagination and thoughts, and thus Mary worshipped God with great strength and nearness before her eyes. What about God for us? Do we ask God to care, pray, intercede, expect, and use us for His Church and His Kingdom to such an extent? God hears such prayers. And God is "Mighty One," as verse 49 says. There is nothing that God cannot do. How can such a thing happen?" Because we are weak, small, feeble, old...it is useless to tell God that we are weak, small, feeble, old. God has a plan for us. God can do anything.

1:45 How blessed is the woman who believed that what the Lord had spoken would be fulfilled!

1:58 When her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, they rejoiced together.

The Lord is the One who comes to us with His great compassion, dancing and leaping about,

filling us with unusual and extreme joy.

Prayer; Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your grace and mercy, for the great, extraordinary, and penetrating joy that is in Christmas. We wish to rejoice and rejoice more and more, to realize from the depths of our hearts that God is great and large, and that His power is unlimited, and to give thanks to you with the greatest of joy and gladness. Please guide us to continue to believe in the living God. Please guide all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and the people in our community. Use us. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.