

## Advent Devotion | Week Three

### A NEW JOY!

#### Luke 1:39 – 45

*<sup>39</sup> At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, <sup>40</sup> where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! <sup>43</sup> But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"*

Mary and Elizabeth had received good news they were to become mothers. For Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah, this news was shocking as they were elderly and "childless" because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both "very old" (Luke 1:7). Elizabeth's initial scepticism about her pregnancy soon became delighted confirmation as she was now in her fifth month. She was joyful as she knew that the "Lord has done this for me...and shown his favour" (Luke 1:25).

Mary's good news of her impending pregnancy was even more startling given she was a virgin and betrothed to Joseph. Joseph being an honourable man was going to divorce her quietly. But God intervened through a dream where he was told not to "be afraid to take Mary...as your wife, because what is conceived in her is

from the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20b). This was the same message delivered to Mary through the angel Gabriel. God’s plans can never be thwarted.

Mary then went to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was now six months pregnant. As Mary entered Elizabeth’s home and greeted her, the baby in her womb (the pre-birthed John the Baptist – Jesus’ forerunner) recognised Mary’s voice and “leaped for joy” (Luke 1:44). Even at birth, John knew who he served and he reacted only in the way a baby in his mother’s womb knew how: through joyful and probably vigorous movement in Elizabeth’s womb. This same joy permeated his mother Elizabeth as she confirmed Mary’s faith that “her Lord would fulfil his promises to her” (Luke 1:45). Mary then broke out in joyful song.

These responses, from the women, and the unborn John, to the Lord’s fulfilled promises were ecstatic and elated. Their jubilant responses were the result of experiencing the hope God had set in their hearts.

What are our reactions and responses when we read His word and hear His call? Like Elizabeth, John, and Mary, we need to be awed by the knowledge and hope that the Lord (who created the heavens and the earth) fulfilled His promise by breaking into time, space and history so as to restore His relationship with His creation. This Omnipotent and Omniscient God has called us to work with Him to fulfil His plan for salvation. Our response should be like John’s: leaping for joy in being able to do so.

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## Reflection

1. As we spend time reading God's word and pondering on His promises, how do we feel?
2. When God calls us like He did with John and Mary, what are our responses? Are we like John and leap for joy? Or like Mary whose response to Gabriel's message was "I am the Lord's servant" (Luke 1:38)?

## Prayer

*Heavenly Father,*

*Thank you for your mercy and grace in that while we were still sinners, You set your great plan of salvation into motion when Jesus came as man to die for our sins. Help us Lord, to experience this divine grace and know that You love us and want to restore the relationship we have with You. Our response to your invitation of salvation Lord, is to say "yes" joyfully. In Christ, Amen*

## Christmas Carol

Listen on YouTube

### EMMANUEL

Emmanuel Emmanuel  
His name is called Emmanuel  
God with us revealed in us  
His name is called Emmanuel

