

Luke 1:39-45

Mother Goose tells us about Mary and her little lamb, “*and everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go.*” St. Luke tells us about the Virgin Mary and the Lamb of God within her, and wherever Mary went, this Lamb, the Lord of heaven and earth, was sure to go. He was but a tiny embryo, barely a week old within Mary. For as soon as she heard the announcement from the angel Gabriel that she would be with child, Mary went quickly to the house of Elizabeth. His mouth and tongue were not formed yet. He had no voice with which to speak. But Mary spoke. She greeted Elizabeth. And when she did, the baby within Elizabeth leaped for joy.

And this, my friends, is why you have joy today. Wherever Mary goes, the Lord goes, for the Lord Jesus is within Mary. And when Mary speaks, wonderful things happen for those who hear.

Jesus was hidden away within Mary’s womb. Elizabeth did not see Him. John the Baptist within her did not see Him. Nor did they hear Him. It was Mary who spoke. This point cannot be emphasized enough.

There was nothing about Mary that could cause a baby to leap for joy. All her young life, Mary would have spoken to many people. But none who heard her words would have been filled with the Holy Spirit nor reacted in wonderful ways. But this changed the moment that the Lord Jesus was conceived within her by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now when Mary speaks, amazing things happen.

Mary is here today. Do you recognize her? She is the water of Baptism within the font. She is the bread and wine on the altar. She is standing before your eyes in the pulpit.

There is nothing about Mary that is out of the ordinary. Mary was a simple peasant girl, despised by the proud and well-to-do. She added no value to society. Her existence was of little importance. And this still is Mary today. The water in the font is ordinary water. The bread and wine on the altar is also quite ordinary. And the servant of God before you is of no significance.

But Mary carries the Lord Jesus. Not for herself, but for you. The Virgin Mary did not keep the Lord within her for herself. She quickly went to the house of Elizabeth. And so God brings your Mary to you to be blessed by the fruit of her womb.

Do not look at Mary too closely with your eyes, for you will not see the Lord within her. Rather, you will see but a peasant...simple water, and simple bread and wine, and a sinful, flawed servant, with a life filled with warts and wrinkles...and you will be offended.

This was not the reaction of Elizabeth. She did not judge with her eyes. She heard the greeting of Mary and she responded with the cry of faith. Your eyes will always deceive you. There is nothing about the Lord which can be believed with our eyes. Faith always comes by hearing. Bethlehem, says the Prophet Micah, was a town too little to be among the clans of Judah. The Baby within her stable looked to the eye like any other baby. But the shepherds worshiped before the manger, for they believed the word they heard from the angel.

You are not here to worship Mary, but the Lord Mary carries to you. And carry Him she does. For where Mary goes, the Lord goes. And so you bring your babies to Baptism believing that as John leaped within Elizabeth, so your child is given that same joy, with faith, life, and the Holy Spirit, as Jesus comes to your child through the Mary of Holy Baptism. And you come to the altar like Elizabeth opening her door to Mary, for you believe that the Mary of ordinary bread and wine carries the Lord Jesus to you. And you look upon the Mary before you with ears wide open to hear the greeting which you are given, for when God's Mary speaks to you, the Lord is at work through that word to do within you that which is wonderful.

When Mary came to Elizabeth, she asked a timely question: "*Why,*" said Elizabeth, "*is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*" Elizabeth did not bring Mary to her house. She did nothing to cause Mary to come to her. All she did was to respond with faith when Mary greeted her at the door.

The same is true of us. Why should Mary, who carries the Lord, come to us? We did not cause it. We did nothing to bring it about. If anything, Mary should avoid us and not come to our door, for our lives are full of disobedience. We have not earned the right to have Mary come carrying the Lord God Almighty to us. She should carry Him in the opposite direction away from us.

Friend, God sends His Mary to you precisely because you and I do not deserve it. He sends His Mary out of mercy. He sends His Mary to greet you with His word of peace because she carries Him who is our peace.

That tiny embryo within Mary would become the man hanging on a cross for you. God would strike Him with that which we deserve on account of our disobedience. This is why John leaped for joy within Elizabeth, because God became flesh within the womb of Mary to rescue every sinner from damnation. And as God sent Mary to the home of Elizabeth, so He sends Mary to sinners like us, for she carries Him who is our salvation.

In this season of Advent, therefore, and always, repent of your disobedience. Do not continue living in sinful ways, for Mary comes carrying your Savior. And open your ears wide, for God's Mary is here even now to greet you with God's word of peace. She can declare this peace to you because she carries your Lord and Savior. You, dear sinner, are forgiven. God is not angry because of your disobedience. He forgives you. He forgives you because He who is the fruit of Mary's womb went to the cross in your place. He took your damnation. He now is your peace.

You are Elizabeth - she, or he, to whom Mary comes. You are one to whom God declares through Mary that all is well; your salvation is secure - not by your doing - no, Elizabeth does nothing. It is by the doing of Him who is the fruit of Mary's womb.

And because you sit here as Elizabeth, you leave here as Mary, for you who believe, now carry Christ to others in your life. You who have heard the word of peace from the mouth of Mary, now carry that same peace of God to others, even as you live in peace. You who believe in Him whom Mary carries, now carry that same Lord wherever you go. And through you, therefore, as Mary's who carry the Lord, God will do wonderful things within the lives of others. Amen.