

The Affirmation of the Promise – Teaching Notes

(Luke 1:39-56; 12/11/16)

Introduction: A key idea in today's Sunday School material is that God confirms the work He is doing in the lives of Mary and Elizabeth. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to live by the promises of God.

Body:

Read Luke 1:39-45

I. Mary's Visit. Mary went to Zechariah's home. There she greeted Elizabeth. There is a pleasant exchange between the women. The baby within Elizabeth (i.e., John the Baptist) leaped for joy, when he heard Mary's greeting.

Applications –

- **Abortion.** Notice in vss. 41, 44 that the unborn baby John leaped for joy in his mother's womb. We cannot look at this text and think that life begins after the baby comes out of the mother. Since the baby is alive in the mother, abortion is murder. On one hand, there is room for discussing aborting the child to save the mother's life and to save the child from a horrible quality of life (i.e., because of a terrible disease). We can even talk about what to do in the case of rape, even though God is able to use the children, in spite of the circumstances of their conception. But to use abortion as a simple form of birth control should not be viewed as a Christian option. On the other hand, for the rare exceptions of allowable abortions, mothers should receive quality care, not self-induced abortions or abortion at the hands of uncertified doctors. *Let's seek and obey God's will regarding the issues related to abortion.*

- **Trusting God's promises.** Notice in vss. 45, 53 that there are great blessings for those who believe and trust God to be a promise keeper. As in the text, we can and should trust God to do what He said He would do. God promise to bless obedience and punish disobedience. *Let's work on living like we trust the promises of God.* Such living should be known for obeying and expecting blessings and avoiding sin, so we can avoid punishment.

Read Luke 1:46-55

II. Mary's Song. Mary shares an eloquent reply to what is going on. This unit of scripture is called "Mary's Song." Mary talks about praising God because of His goodness. She is happy about God taking care of His humble people, while giving the unrighteous what they deserve as well.

Applications –

- **Singing with enthusiasm and sense.** Notice in vss. 46-55 that the lyrics to "Mary's Song" made sense. In like manner, believers should make sure that the lyrics to our songs make sense (i.e., are in line with biblical principles). It doesn't matter how good our songs sound. If they are not theologically sound then they are not good. Furthermore, we should sing with enthusiasm. The more we reflect on the goodness of the Lord, the more we should rejoice. *Let's work on singing with enthusiasm songs that make sense.*

- **Mary.** Notice in vs. 48 that Mary is a servant of the Lord. On one hand, we should be thankful that God can use people of humble means. If God can use Mary, He can use us. On the other hand, Mary was not and is not a little goddess. It seems rather contrary to what we see in the Bible for believers to pray to Mary (i.e., as some Roman Catholics do). We should pray to God, and Mary is not God nor a god. *Let's respect God's use of Mary without treating her as a goddess.*

- **God's blessings and punishments.** Notice in vss. 48-53 that God has been good to His people, while punishing those who reject Him. First, we should be thankful for God's goodness. No matter our lot in life, God is able to do great things in and through the lives of His people. Second, God is able to punish those who reject Him. We don't have to worry about them. *Let's live like we trust God to bless His people and punish those who reject Him.* This application should move us to make sure that we are saved and striving to live lives focused on loving God with all that we have and loving others, as we love ourselves, instead of rejecting Him or worrying about those who reject Him.

Read Luke 1:56

III. Mary's Return. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months. Mary then went back home.

Applications –

- **Our homes.** Notice in vs. 56 that Mary went back to her home. First, there are times when we need to go home. We should not wear out our welcomes (see Pro. 25:17). Second, we should make sure that we do our part to keep our home life together, so it is a pleasant place to be. Some people stay in the homes of others because they don't enjoy their own home. *Let's work on building our homes up and exercising wisdom about how long we should be in the homes of others.*

Conclusion: Let's work on living by the promises of God. God has much for those who obey His will.