

Declarations of Great Hope
Series: Luke
December 10, 2017 **Pastor Bill Bump**

As we continue in Luke 1, we find Mary after her encounter with an angel, traveling to meet the couple who had an encounter with the same angel.

Luke 1:39-45 ³⁹ *A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town ⁴⁰ where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

⁴² *Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. ⁴³ Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? ⁴⁴ When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵ You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."*

Mary responded to this greeting with a song praising God for His goodness.

In Luke 1:39-80, we find two declarations that remind us of important truths about what the coming of Jesus means for us. These declarations should fill our hearts with joy.

First declaration: The joyful song of Mary

Mary recognized that God was her Savior.

Luke 1:46-48 ⁴⁶ *Mary responded, "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. ⁴⁷ How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! ⁴⁸ For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed."*

Mary sang that God is our strength.

Luke 1:49-50 ⁴⁹ *"For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me. ⁵⁰ He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him."*

Mary sang that God is a God of victory.

Luke 1:51-53 ⁵¹ *"His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. ⁵² He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted*

the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands."

Mary sang that God is merciful in keeping His promises.

Luke 1:54-55 ⁵⁴ "He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. ⁵⁵ For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever."

Second declaration: The joyful prophecy of Zechariah

Luke 1:57-67 ⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ And when her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very merciful to her, everyone rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹ When the baby was eight days old, they all came for the circumcision ceremony. They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father. ⁶⁰ But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John!"

⁶¹ "What?" they exclaimed. "There is no one in all your family by that name." ⁶² So they used gestures to ask the baby's father what he wanted to name him. ⁶³ He motioned for a writing tablet, and to everyone's surprise he wrote, "His name is John." ⁶⁴ Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.

⁶⁵ Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard about it reflected on these events and asked, "What will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was surely upon him in a special way.

⁶⁷ Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy...

In this passage we find the fulfillment of the angel's pronouncement in the Temple.

Luke 1:13-14 ¹³ But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. ¹⁴ You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth..."

Zechariah was led by the Holy Spirit to make a proclamation similar to Mary's.

Zechariah said God is the Redeemer.

Luke 1:68-70 ⁶⁸ "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. ⁶⁹ He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David, ⁷⁰ just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago."

Zechariah said God is our Deliverer.

Luke 1:71-75⁷¹ "Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us."⁷² He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant—⁷³ the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham. ⁷⁴ We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live."

Zechariah said God is merciful.

Luke 1:76-79⁷⁶ "And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. ⁷⁷ You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸ Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, ⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."

Conclusion

God's message to us this morning is the same as it was to Zechariah and Mary: Do not fear. I will fulfill my promises to you.

The Bible says "Do not fear" 34 times.

Psalm 46:1-2¹ God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. ² So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

The Bible says "Do not be afraid" 78 times.

John 14:27 I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

The Bible tells us 19 times to be courageous.

Joshua 1:9 This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Each time we are told not to fear or not to be afraid, the reason is the same: God will be with you. This truth is what both Zechariah and Mary declared in Luke 1.