The Visitation

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[0:00] Well, the good news of great joy that shines through the Christmas story is radically transformative for those who respond to it in faith.

Of course, if you've been a Christian for very long at all, you know that to be true. But the joy itself is actually a part of that transformation. True joy that transcends the more basic feelings of happiness and sadness is only experienced by individuals who, like Mary, take God at His Word and receive by faith the person and work of Jesus Christ.
That's what we learned through the angel's announcement to Mary last week as we begin this study in Luke chapter 1 and 2. The angel's message was one of God's grace and salvation, particularly through the incarnation of Christ.
That Mary, the virgin, would conceive a child and that this child would be the Son of God and the Messiah born to die, actually, providing salvation by God's grace for all who will believe and follow Him.
And Mary's total trust in this, taking God at His Word, is reflected in her response in verse 38.
You've got your Bible open. Just look at it there, just one verse up from where we began.
[1:28] In verse 38, Mary responds by saying, Behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word. And we have in this little statement just a wonderful reflection of what it means to respond to the gospel message in faith, in a true saving faith.

Mary hears the Word of God. She understands, or at least begins to understand, the fact of the gospel as it is represented in this child that she will have.
And her response is not to shrink away from that. Her response actually is to say, I belong to the Lord. I will believe Him and I will follow Him in whatever path He leads me.
In today's text, we see the beginnings of how God continues to produce gospel joy in the lives of those who come to Him in faith.
And what's unmistakable in this passage is that this ongoing work of God's grace is accomplished in the context of a community of believers.
[2:38] This section is about how God directed Mary to a community of faith where she was united with people of a common belief, common experience, and a common hope.

And of course, all of this commonality, all of this unity is founded ultimately on their mutual faith in the gospel of Christ. That's what we see unfolding here with Mary and Elizabeth.
And what we find here is that this is actually evidence of God's loving kindness. It's His tender care that is revealed as He brings Mary and Elizabeth together in these critical moments of their lives.
Now we need to think about this for just a moment from Mary's perspective. Remember what we talked about last week. Mary, Mary at this point, is probably somewhere between 12 and 14 years old. Okay, Ashlyn, this month, in two weeks, Ashlyn's going to turn 11.
Can you imagine? Chelsea's about to turn 12. Can you imagine Chelsea coming to church here in just a few months and saying, hey, I've got news. An angel came to me and said that, though I'm a virgin, I actually have a child in my womb, and it's actually going to be the one who saves us all from sin and hell.
[4:01] And what a difficult thing that would be for Chelsea in particular to understand that and to believe it, but then to actually try to get anyone else to believe it as well. That would actually be a very lonely place for her, right?

Because none of us would believe her. Even if her parents tried to agree with the news that she was sharing, none of us are going to believe Deborah in that either, because we would say that's not possible.

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That's not possible. And it would be a very lonely place. Now imagine you're Mary, and that's your exact circumstance. She has this news that's been delivered by an angel whom no one has seen except for Zechariah.
No one has seen in at least 400 years any kind of prophetic word that has come directly from the Lord. And Mary, the 12 or 13-year-old from Nazareth of all places, is the one where he decides to appear.
That's a lonely place to be. And what we see unfolding in this passage is God in his providence brings Mary to Elizabeth. And in this moment, they share a commonality of faith, a commonality of miraculous works of God's grace in their lives.
[5:12] And Mary has at least in one other person someone she can speak to, someone she can be encouraged by, someone who understands her circumstance and her condition.

That's a grace of the Lord in her life. God united them in gospel companionship, which produced prophetic assurances that strengthen their faith all the more.
And then this work of God overflowed in young Mary through this dynamic worship as she reflected on God fulfilling his promises. And I want to suggest to you this morning that God's kindness through joyful gospel community is not isolated to exceptional circumstances like Mary's.
It's actually his good design for all Christians. It's his good design for you and me as well. If you know Christ, if you are a follower of Jesus, you're a true disciple of Jesus, you can go into this world and you can share the news about the miracle that God is working in your life.
And most people will not believe you. And it'll be a lonely place. But God in his providence brings us together with other people who have experienced the same miracle of God's grace in salvation.
[6:42] We call it the local church. And with these people, we find a commonality, a place where our faith is encouraged and strengthened, a place where we find true worship, spiritual growth.

So just as the angelic announcement of verses 26 to 38 reflect the gospel message, Mary's visit with Elizabeth reflects the gospel community that God desires for us to enjoy.
This good news of great joy, as we're calling it, is something that we share together. And this is a helpful passage in reminding us of that. Three things I want to point out to you as we go through. And of course, I bit off more than I could chew with this. We're going to have to kind of do a very surface level approach to this section. But hang with me as we do that, okay? The first thing is this. We find gospel companionship.
Gospel companionship. Look with me at verse 39. In those days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to a town in Judah. And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.
[7:54] We can sense the excitement in Mary as she wasted no time in leaving Nazareth to pay a visit to Elizabeth in the mountains of Judea.

The fact that she made haste here, as we see in verse 39, made haste to get there, shows the eagerness with which she desired to speak to Elizabeth.
And why is it that she wants to go to Elizabeth? Because the angel has just told her in the previous passage not only that she would be pregnant and that her child would be the Son of God and the Messiah, but as a sign to assure her in that, Gabriel says to her, and God is doing this in your relative Elizabeth as well.
So it's not entirely surprising that as soon as the angel leaves, Mary makes haste to go and find Elizabeth to see what is happening with her. This trip would have taken probably three to four days. And you can only imagine Mary's mind racing all the questions that were left unanswered by the angel that appeared to her. There's no mention of Mary's parents in all of this, which is strange, isn't it?
[9:08] We don't know if they believed her. We don't even know if she told them what was happening. All we know is that within a few days of Gabriel's announcement, Mary had worked out a way to travel 80 to 100 miles to see Elizabeth.

Now the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth and their miraculous conception is recorded in other parts of the chapter. I'll leave it to you to read that on your own. But here's basically the synopsis. Zechariah was a Levite. He was fulfilling his duty serving in the temple in Jerusalem. And while he was performing that duty, this same angel appears to him basically with the same message that his wife was going to bear a child.

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Well, the problem with this, or at least the miracle of it, is that they were both well beyond childbearing years and Elizabeth had been physically unable to have children her entire life.
So it's a miracle the same way, not in the same way as it is with Mary. We don't need to confuse the two. Elizabeth was not a virgin and Zechariah was the natural father of their baby.
[10:27] The miracle relates to their age and to their inability to have a child to begin with. But their child was no ordinary child either. He would later be known as John the Baptizer and he would be the prophetic forerunner of the Messiah, which the Old Testament had also prophesied.

In fact, Gabriel uses a direct quote from the prophet Malachi here. Look back with me in chapter 1. Just look at verse 16. You'll put your eyes on it there.
And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.
Okay, that's a direct quotation from the prophet Malachi. There's other prophecies particularly in Isaiah, I believe, where the prophets had said God had spoken through them and said, not only am I going to eventually send the Messiah, but just before he arrives, I'm going to send another one. It's not another Messiah, another prophet. This prophet is going to preach in the wilderness. He's going to cry out preparing the way for the Lord Christ to come. He's preparing the hearts of the people and here comes the angel Gabriel.
[11:50] He appears to Zechariah in the temple and he says, this child will be this prophet and he will prepare the way for the Christ. Now, what I believe is noteworthy about Mary's travel to see Elizabeth is that the scriptures never indicate that she was told to go there.

The angel didn't tell her to go see Elizabeth. He only told her that God was doing a miraculous work in Elizabeth as well. Now, it seems to have been Mary's natural instinct to seek out others whom the angel told her were also experiencing God's grace.
And we can all relate to that instinct as we gravitate toward people with similar interests and similar experiences in life because life was not designed to be lived in isolation.
That's why isolation and exile has been considered a judgment and a punishment going all the way back to the time that Cain murdered Abel. All the way to today.
You get in trouble in prison, they send you to isolation. Some places you get in trouble, you break enough laws, they send you into exile. Why? Because life is not meant to be lived alone.
[13:15] It's not meant to be lived outside of community. And so we naturally gravitate toward people in which we find commonality and we unite with them in helping one another through life.

But what's important to see about Mary's companionship with Elizabeth is that it was produced by their mutual faith in God's salvation, specifically through the child that was in Mary's womb.
God had not only sent them with good news, messengers with good news of great joy, but He was providing them with gospel companionship that would encourage their hearts, it would strengthen their faith, it would deepen their worship because God has designed us to function within community.
community. And nothing can compare to the kind of companionship that's experienced in gospel community with other people who have experienced the same miraculous touch of God through Christ Jesus.
And this is exactly what God has provided to us in the church. It's a wonderful grace of the Lord that we have one another to share in spiritual community that's based on our union with Christ.
[14:44] And if you're a Christian, you've experienced this work and He desires to continue His work in your life through the local church. The blessing of Mary and Elizabeth's companionship reflects what we have together in Christ.

And we should be just as eager as Mary to do as they did. To unite together. To be together. To encourage one another.
To help one another. You say, how do we actually do that? How do we prioritize that? How do we show this eagerness and live this out in our lives? There's lots of ways that we do that.
One way is that we eagerly make the trip. Just like Mary did. She wastes no time she sets aside everything else. She's in the process of preparing for marriage.
That was an important time in her life. She sets aside these other things and she makes haste to get to where Elizabeth is. I think there's a picture in that for us. What do we do as believers?

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[15:50] We set aside the other things of our life that would get in the way of this and we eagerly make the trip. We prioritize the gathering of God's people. Particularly in Sunday worship.

But of course whenever we have other opportunities to do this as well. We prioritize one another. Prioritize time with one another. We work out our schedules to prioritize worship.
Not find a place to fit it in if it works out. We share the work of God. We talk to one another about it. Here's what the Lord's doing in my life.
Here's a joy that He has brought to my life this week. Here's a way that He's disciplining me right now. We sharpen one another in that way. We rejoice through worship.
Not only in our Sunday gatherings we rejoice in worship when we go and sit at coffee and we reflect on the goodness of God in our lives. We lift our voices in praise and in prayer to the Lord through that.
[16:53] We have gospel companionship reflected here. Number two, we see prophetic assurances. Prophetic assurances. So the good news of Jesus brought great joy to Elizabeth which reassured Mary's heart.

That's what we find here. One of the benefits of this gospel companionship is that God uses other believers to help us. Mary had already demonstrated faith in God's Word.
We read that just a moment ago. But there's no doubt that she would have been seeking some reassurance and clarity from Elizabeth's experience. Isn't that the whole reason that the angel even told her about Elizabeth?
Of course. There's two ways that God used this encounter to speak prophetic assurances to Mary's young heart. The first one is through John's prophecy.
Look with me at verses 41 and 44. Verse 41, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. Now look down at verse 44. This is how Elizabeth reflects on that.
[18:02] For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Now this may come as a shock to you, but I have never personally been pregnant.

I don't know what it's like to feel a baby's kick in my body. I've only been able to experience that through Julie, which is a unique experience, but not in the same way that it was for her.
Many of you have experienced this before. We'd love to see all these children with us. Many of you have experienced this many times before. Every mother knows it.
She knows what this is like, but there's something unique about what Elizabeth felt that day. This wasn't just any ordinary kick in Elizabeth's belly.
Otherwise, Luke wouldn't have bothered to mention it, and she wouldn't have bothered to interpret it the way that she did. There was a prophet in Elizabeth's belly, and this was his first prophecy.
[19:10] When Mary greeted Elizabeth, the Spirit of God produced this joyous leap. That's what Elizabeth said. He leapt for joy. This was an emotional response from the fetus in Elizabeth's belly, which, just as a side note, is another reflection of the Bible stance on the personhood of children who are still in their mother's bellies.

From what I understand, the custom of that day required particular forms of greetings. Mary would have had a particular greeting that showed great deference and respect for Elizabeth as an elder and as a respected person in their community and perhaps even in their family.
But then John leaps in her belly indicating that John in this moment is showing that the one who really deserves the deference, the one who really deserves the reverence and respect is actually the young child in Mary's womb.
And it's this joyous announcement of the Messiah that would mark John's ministry. John chapter 1 and verse 6, there was a man sent from God whose name was John.
He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him. He was not the light but came to bear witness about the light.
[20:33] And what is John doing from his earliest moments in his mother's womb? He's bearing witness about the light. And of course, this carries on into adulthood.

In John chapter 3, John says this, John the baptizer, the one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, that's what he was calling, referring to himself about, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.
Therefore, this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease. From Elizabeth's wombs, John is already doing this. Mary shows up with the Messiah in her womb.

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John leaps for joy, bearing witness of the light. The Savior has come. He wasn't bearing witness of his own miraculous conception. He was bearing witness of the miraculous conception of the Lord Jesus Christ.
John's purpose was to point everyone to Jesus, and he was fulfilling that purpose before he had even been born. born. Now, what amazing assurance this must have been for Mary.
[21:43] At this point in Mary's pregnancy, it hasn't been long enough, probably, hasn't been long enough for her to even experience the nausea and the sickness that comes along with being pregnant.

She made great haste to get to Elizabeth after this angel appeared. This may be within a week of Gabriel's appearance to her. She may be still wondering with doubts in her mind, is this really true, or am I just going crazy right now?
And then when she shows up and she finds Elizabeth, she sees that the work that God is doing in Elizabeth has a way of producing assurance, for the work that God is doing in her own heart and in her own life.
And isn't this the blessing of what God does for us? He brings us together in gospel companionship and then what we find is just in the moments of our lives where we're really beginning to doubt, we're really beginning to wonder, is this really all true?
Can I really trust and take God at His word in this way? And then we get along with another believer and we listen to how God is using their life and the Lord uses that to encourage our own hearts, to strengthen our own faith.
[22:59] And of course, that's exactly what is happening with Mary. But it's not just John's prophecy, it's Elizabeth's prophecy as well. Look at verse 42. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, blessed are you among women, blessed is the fruit of your womb.

And why is this granted to me? that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Before Mary even had a chance to explain what was happening, the Spirit of God causes Elizabeth to speak as if she already knew it all.
Notice what she says. She reiterated Mary's blessedness. That's what the angel had told Mary. She acknowledged her pregnancy. She even understood the child to be the Messiah.
Listen to her words. Why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Surely this exhilarated Mary's heart.
Surely this began to dispel doubts that were in her mind that maybe have crept into her mind as she traveled to Judea. And I think what Mary experiences here with Elizabeth is how God intends for us to help one another.
[24:19] We all demonstrate our faith in Christ as individuals, but it is a wonderful encouragement to gather with Christians to hear and see how God is working. We have all of these one another commands in the Bible.

We have these moments where the Lord uses people to confirm God's work on our lives. Have you ever experienced that before? We talked about it in our anniversary service just a couple of weeks ago.
One of the things that is so helpful to me on the days when I'm really struggling or the days when I'm doubting or wondering, did we do this whole church plant thing just because Jared wanted to be the boss or was tired of listening to Jonathan or just wanted to do his own thing or just needed a change in his life?
And then I can go back to that box of letters that I have in my office and I can begin to read those letters and it just is a helpful reminder to me that yes, the Lord was doing a work in my life in that process, but there is an amazing comfort that comes from knowing that that work was affirmed by other believers, that God was doing his work in me through others.
That's what's happening for Mary. I think he desires for that to happen with us. Look at verse 45. Verse 45. Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.
[25:51] I love that all these kids are in here this morning and I don't want them to go away. And this point is for these children because I want you to think about what's happening here. This final portion of Elizabeth's prophecy is a formal beatitude.

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It's a beatitude that's recognizing Mary's faith. Now this would have had incredible significance to Elizabeth and to Zechariah because Zechariah did not initially believe the word of God.
In fact, he spends the duration of Elizabeth's pregnancy mute. God took his voice away because he doubted the message of the angel. He didn't believe the word of the Lord.
And it was only after John's birth that he gets that back. This would have been a significant statement that as this man who has spent his whole life, a godly man, that's what Luke says in chapter 1, he's godly, he's righteous, he spent his life serving the Lord in the temple as a Levite, doing everything that God had asked him to do, trusting the promises of God.
But in this moment and in this circumstance, it was 12 and 13 year old Mary that actually was the one that believed the word of God, not Zechariah. The statement is a reminder that God is pleased to bless those who take him at his word rather than those who attempt to earn his favor.
[27:19] Hebrews 11, without faith it's impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

But it's also a reminder that age and experience are not prerequisites for profound faith.
In fact, in our fallen state, age and experience can actually become giant obstacles to faith. The longer we exist in this flesh, the greater our propensity for self-reliance, self- assurance, self-guidance.
This is the reason that Jesus said that if you're going to be his disciple, you must come to him like a child, trusting entirely in him for salvation, trusting entirely in him for safety and security, that his purposes will be fulfilled in us in just the way that God intends.
And to insist that age and experience is necessary for genuine faith is to deny the reality of Mary's trusting God here.
[28:34] Now, I recognize she wasn't a toddler, and I'm not trying to draw that particular parallel. I'm just saying that it's pretty remarkable that a young teenager would demonstrate such genuine faith.

No, she hasn't had enough experience in her life to really be tested with whatever the systems of the world were. She didn't understand how to argue all the things that maybe she would need to argue as she becomes an adult and grows deeper in her theological perspectives.
She wasn't there yet, but she still had a genuine faith, a genuine faith that the Bible then says was blessed of the Lord. It was genuine. It was authentic.
It was not complete. It was not thorough. But it was real. And I think we need to remember that with our children. At this age, they cannot understand all the things that they need to understand.
They can't argue positions in the way that they'll have to argue positions as they grow older. But they don't need to go through the greatest doubts of their life to know that their faith is real or to even be able to have a real faith.
[29:42] That's not the teaching of the Bible. They don't have to wait to go through the worst experiences in life to know whether or not this is all real and whether it's true and whether they're going to believe it.

It's actually the opposite. They need to establish this now. Kent Hughes said the church must never make the mistake of minimizing or patronizing its youth.
Children must be taken seriously. Teenagers must be intelligently challenged. The church must invest deeply in the spiritual nurture and discipling of its young.
That's something we need to lay as a foundation now as a people. All of these kids are going to be teenagers before long. Chelsea and Ashlyn and Clementine are on the cusp of it already.
And if they can go and sit through a calculus class in high school, surely we can do better than God told Noah to build and Arky, Arky, or whatever the songs are that sometimes we sing, it needs to take them serious.
[30:49] This thing goes for the home. Mary's faith was likely the product of faithful parents who are committed to raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

And Elizabeth is right. The one who believes the word of God will be blessed by God. And we all know how strong the temptation to doubt the Lord grows as we age.
So we need to commit to taking seriously the discipling of our children. And then we need to go to them and we need to learn from them because there's a lot we can learn from Mary, a child, in this passage.

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Gospel companionship, prophetic assurances, finally we'll be finished, word-based worship. Word-based worship. These final verses, verses 46 to 55, they record what many refer to as the very first Christmas song.
We know for sure that its contents composed one of the earliest Christian hymns. It's called the Magnificent. Perhaps the title given to the paragraph in your Bible maybe even says that, the Magnificent.
[32:02] That term comes from the Latin translation of the very first phrase, my soul magnifies the Lord. And like with all things related to the Virgin Mary, it's been misused by the Roman Catholic tradition.

But we shouldn't let the abuse of one group rob the rest of us of its significance in Christian prayer and worship. In fact, we do have a tendency to do that from time to time, don't we?
We understand as Protestants that there is something vastly different, necessarily different between us and Roman Catholicism and some of the Orthodox churches as well. But we need to be careful that we don't rob ourselves of genuine, helpful, uplifting tradition just because it also is utilized in some fashion in these other churches.
The Magnificent is one of those things. We need to learn from it. We need to examine it. We could spend weeks really examining it. We're not going to do that. In fact, I'm not even going to read it. I'm going to let you read it again.
We've read it once already. I'll let you read it on your own time. I just want to kind of do a flyover of it as it connects to the larger context of this passage. Okay? Martin Luther said, At home in my own house, there is no warmth or vigor in me.
[33:19] But in the church, when the multitude is gathered together, a fire is kindled in my heart and it breaks its way through. Now, I'm certain that Luther had magnificent moments of private worship during his life.

There is no doubt about that. But his experience here and what he says is actually generally true for all of us. If you've ever attended a professional sporting event, if you're into that kind of thing, there is a difference between the way that I cheer for the New York Yankees in my living room by myself or with Julie, who doesn't care about it, versus when I'm actually in Yankee Stadium in the South Bronx and there's 55,000 people who have gathered around me.
And I got to be, several years ago, I was with my brother and a friend, Ken Baker. We went and it just happened to be Bernie Williams night. They were retiring this stuff and putting them in Monument Park.
It was Derek Jeter's first night back to Yankee Stadium since he retired. And I've never heard a play so loud in my life. The game hasn't even started yet. And we're sitting in the stands and the place is deafeningly loud only because Derek Jeter is there.
Now, there's a commonality in what's happening between all those people. They're all there because they love the Yankees. And when they're together, there is a difference in the way that they cheer than if I had been sitting in my living room and watching these pregame rituals unfold.
[34:46] You know what this is like. Our worship can be like this sometimes. There are unique moments that we have in private worship where the Lord is working in us and we are blessed beyond measure.

But there is a difference between doing that in our living rooms alone and when we come together as God's people and we sing his praise together and we reflect on his word together.
That's what Luther's getting at. That is a part of what I think is happening here for Mary. She's not alone now. She's gone to Elizabeth. Elizabeth has done this work and explained this work of God and it's uplifted her heart.
It's encouraged her. She has this assurance and what that then produces in Mary is this dynamic worship. Now when you bring together a group of individuals whose unity is based on the union that they find in Christ and then you add to that that God's spirit indwells each and every one of them in a powerful way, we should expect nothing less than passionate worship that is so reflected in Mary's prayer.
Every Sunday when we come together, when we sing our songs, when we read the words, when we pray together, it should have the passion and the vigor because we have exactly what Mary had.
[36:00] We have companionship. We have assurances. We have the spirit of God in our lives and that should be reflected in the way that we worship. But the thing I want to point out and I want

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you to notice about Mary's worship before we finish is that it's all based on the scriptures.

It was the Bible that shaped her heart and informed her worship. It was her dual sense of use of soul and spirit that shows her desire to give her whole self to God in ways that mirror God's command to love him with all our heart and our soul and our mind and our strength.
She made a direct allusion to the prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1, applying God's word to her own experience. She recognized the mercy of God for the humble and the judgment of God against the proud in the same exact way that the Psalms do.
She praised God for his faithfulness to the promises given to Abraham and through the prophets in the Old Testament. All of this is what makes up Mary's song. Now critics will use the content of Mary's prayer to deny its authenticity.
They assert that an illiterate 13-year-old girl from Nazareth would never be able to praise in such a way that is so richly theological. But what they fail to acknowledge is that every young Israelite knew by heart the biblical songs of Hannah, Deborah, of David, these passages were memorized.
[37:40] They were regularly utilized in Sabbath worship and on the feast days. Kent Hughes again says Mary's mind was full of scripture and sacred phraseology from what she heard both in the synagogue and at home.

So when the Holy Spirit came upon her, he took what she had and wove it into his hallowed tapestry. The magnificent, he says, was a poignant, profound, divine human composition.
It was nothing less. Mary's prayer models the way that every Christian should worship. The scriptures should shape and inform our words in private and in corporate worship.
The more we know and study them, the easier it will be to view life in light of what God has said.
And what could give God more pleasure than when his people passionately worship him with his own inerrant, infallible, and authoritative words?
Amazing worship. Word-based worship. Now Mary's visit to Elizabeth is a beautiful picture of God's grace. He unites us together.
[39:02] He assures our hearts. We teach one another through the word and the result is dynamic worship as we sing his words back to him. But the foundation of this community is faith in Christ.

Too many people attempt to find the great joy without the good news. But they've got that backwards. You can never experience the everlasting joy that's promised at Christmas until you believe in and follow the Christ of Christmas.
And when you come to faith in Jesus, you'll find that his joy is abundant, that he lavishes it on us in ways we would never have imagined.
And that includes the glorious grace that we find in the local church. Companionship. All centered on the gospel. The good news of great joy.

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