

**Mic 5:2-5a; Lu 1:47-55; He 10:5-10; Lu 1:39-45**  
**Fulfillment and Peace**

We pray constantly for peace – world peace – inner peace – true peace. We need **God's peace**. But, the peace of God is not some quiet nothingness without motion or direction. Not at all. In God's kingdom, there is the "fall and rise of many" according to the Prophet Simeon (Lu 2:34) – and a complete reversal of the worldly status quo. We are called not to mourn the massive shift of God's moving. No, rather we are called to sing and shout for joy that divine justice overcomes all oppressors and tyrants. And the world enters God's peace.

So, this week we look in on a most unusual scene: Mary of Nazareth travels to the hill country of Judea. She is visiting her kinswoman, Elizabeth. Why visit now? She will probably see her aunt (or cousin) at the next Passover in Jerusalem. Both these women are devoted the Lord – observant Jews who keep kosher in the home and obey all the laws of the Torah. But Mary has heard news of Elizabeth. When she was visited by the Angel Gabriel, Mary learned that she was to have a baby who would be the Messiah. At

the same time, Gabe told her that Elizabeth is also going to have a child. Wow! Who ever said the Lord doesn't have a sense of humor? Mary is having a baby at a most awkward time. Betrothed but not yet married, she should be pure. Well, she is pure. That's the point. Elizabeth, on the other hand, has longed for a baby for so many years that she and Zechariah have basically given up. She is very old to be pregnant. Actually, Zechariah thought Gabriel was joking – and he is enduring nine months of speechless silence. He has been struck mute on account of his disbelief. This does bring a certain peace to the household, I'm sure.

We are receiving the good news of a double miracle. It was pleasing to God. Both pregnancies are impossible by human standards. But, with God all things are **possible**. And these faithful servants of the Lord are living out the reality of God's fulfillment of all God has promised. Have you faced a major shift and upheaval in your life? Have you said, "Why has this happened to me?" Recall, that is what Elizabeth asked. Why has this happened to me? We say we want the will of God – we pray for the

will of God to be done on earth as in heaven. Then, when the wonders begin maybe we get cold feet. Maybe we don't like the way God is bringing forth His holy will.

When we packed up and went to school across the country, we moved into family housing on campus. There were twelve apartments in the building. Five out of twelve women were pregnant! Well, seminary means "seedbed" or "plant nursery." We had a group baby shower. We all pooled our money and had huge gift bags of didies, lotion, wet wipes, onesies, baby blankets – and so on. It was a nice party. We giggled and played silly games and ate. I joked at the time that I certainly wasn't going to drink the water in that building. There is joy when God brings fruitfulness out of barrenness – provision out of lack – light in the darkness. Knowing that God is in control brings peace that is both comfort and assurance that things are being set right – on earth as in heaven. Peace settles on us.

When Mary enters the house, Elizabeth feels the stirring of the baby within her. She is given

supernatural joy and blesses her young cousin: “...blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.” (Lu 1:45) They share some weeks of fellowship and mutual encouragement. Then Mary returned to Nazareth.

At that moment she met Elizabeth, young Mary opens her mouth and proclaims the mercy and the sovereign power of God. We call this prophetic song the “Magnificat” because the first line in Latin is: “Magnificat ánima mea Dóminum,” or “My soul magnifies the Lord.”

Mary offers both personal and national praise to the Lord for the work He is accomplishing in her very body. We hear again the prophetic movement – the lowly are lifted up – powerful rulers are brought down. God’s perfect will is to fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty.

Divine justice upsets all the power-structures of a world where wealth is stock-piled by the few and poverty is rampant among billions. The rejoicing these women share is spiritual – not material.

Yet, the will of God is being manifested in the flesh – a very material birth into the world. Mary also proclaims the truth of the New Covenant that is coming in this Prince of Peace: “God’s mercy is for those who are in awe of Him from generation to generation.” (v 50) Whoever believes in God through His Son Jesus Christ is welcome in – included – sealed in the Holy Spirit – invited to rejoice along with these amazing women who are joined together in the double miracle. Mary reminds us also that these promises of God began with Abraham, the father of our faith. Abraham “believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Ro 4:3)

The messages of the four candles we have lit tell the story of God setting everything to right: Hope – Love – Joy and Peace. Tomorrow evening we light the white candle to honor the King of kings, Lord of lords and Prince of Peace. You are invited – you are encouraged – you are commanded to celebrate the miracle – our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

