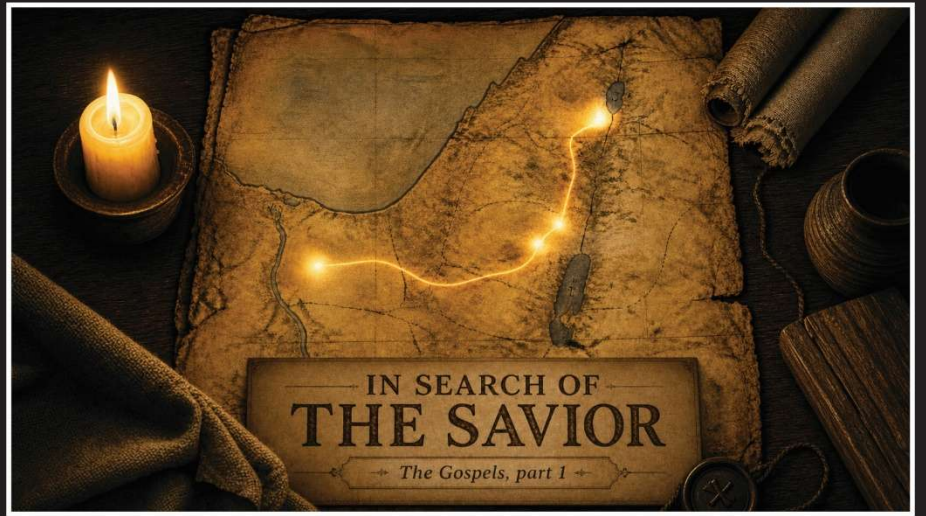




Midweek Study

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Encouraged by the Faith of a Friend

Luke 1:39-56

Five CONFIRMATIONS to Encourage Mary:

1. The **Courage** of Mary (Luke 1:39-40)

- The first confirmation came through her own courage to act on the one piece of evidence she had been given. She had heard the word. She arose. She went.

2. The **Celebration** of John (Luke 1:41)

- Luke 1:15 had already told us something unusual about John the Baptist: "He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15, NKJV). The Holy Spirit had already filled John even before he was born.

3. The **Conviction** of Elizabeth (Luke 1:42-45)

4. The **Confidence** of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)

Mary's "Magnificat" - The name comes from the first word of the Latin translation of the text, Magnificat, which means "[My soul] magnifies [the Lord]" (*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*). In her hymn, she moves beyond what God had done for Mary personally and describes what God is like.

- a) **God's Holiness (v. 49) "Holy is His name."** God is completely free from sin. He is separate from and exalted above His creation.
- b) **God's Mercy (v. 50) "His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation."**
- c) **God's Power (v. 51) "He has shown strength with His arm."** The entire passage began with two impossible conceptions. Mary now celebrates the God whose power makes the impossible possible.
- d) **God's Sovereignty (vv. 51-53)**
 - Mary describes God scattering the proud, bringing down the mighty, exalting the lowly, filling the hungry, and sending the rich away empty.
 - God does not measure people by the standards by which the world measures greatness.

- The proud and powerful are not automatically favored by God. His holiness expresses itself in mercy toward the humble and opposition toward the proud.

e) **God's Faithfulness (vv. 54-55)**

Mary's song draws deeply from the Old Testament, particularly from Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2:1–10. The parallels are striking:

Hannah, 1 Samuel 2

- v. 1: "My heart rejoices in the LORD"
- v. 2: "There is none holy like the LORD."
- v. 4: "The bows of the mighty men are broken."
- v. 5: "Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, And the hungry have ceased to hunger."

Mary, Luke 1

- vv. 46-47: "My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."
- v. 49: "Holy is His name."
- v. 52: "He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly."
- v. 53: "He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty."

5. The **Commitment** of Fellowship (Luke 1:56)

- Elizabeth was six months pregnant when Mary arrived. Mary stayed until Elizabeth was nine months along, departing apparently just before John's birth (Luke 1:57). During those three months, they encouraged one another. Mary would serve an elderly pregnant woman during her final trimester. By the time Mary left, she herself would have been three months pregnant. Her condition would have been visible when she returned to Nazareth.

APPLICATIONS FOR TODAY:

- 1) **We need to fellowship with those who believe like we do.** Sometimes we need the strength that comes from those who have the same kind of story as we do, the same kind of priorities, the same kind of Lord. Don't forsake assembling with those who believe like you do – you will gain strength from these relationships. After Peter and John were threatened, beaten, and commanded to stop preaching, Luke says, "Being let go, they went to their own companions" (Acts 4:23, NKJV).
- 2) **Saturate your life with God's Word.** You never know when you will be called upon to believe God for something unexpected or difficult. If you were to begin to sing, would Hannah's prayer, Psalms or verses of Scripture flow from your lips?

EXTRA: Mary – the Model for Women Everywhere

1. Mary was a woman of the highest moral purity. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21-22
2. Mary was totally submissive to the will of God. Luke 1:34-35, Luke 1:38
3. Mary was saturated with the Word of God.
4. Mary guarded her tongue. Luke 2:19
5. Mary was willing to suffer that others might live.
 - We refer to her as the "Mother of Sorrows" (*Mater Dolorosa*). Luke 2:35
 - Mary always had to face the claim that Jesus was an illegitimate son.