

# THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

By: Jan Davis

Today is Tuesday, December 3 and we are in the season of Advent. This week we are studying the songs of Elizabeth and Mary recorded in the Gospel of Luke.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Holy and Loving God, my heart is full of joy as I begin the season of Advent anticipating the celebration of the birth of Your Son, our savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. As a new day begins, I come to this quiet place and pause to rest in Your presence. I breathe deeply, still my mind and focus on the words of these two beautiful women - Mary the mother of Jesus and her cousin Elizabeth. Let me hear the message you have for me today through the words of these ancient songs. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" Luke 1:41-45***

## REFLECTION

Today's section of the Gospel of Luke is often termed Elizabeth's Song. Upon hearing her cousin Mary's voice, the babe in Elizabeth's womb jumps for joy and she is filled with the Holy Spirit. The unborn John the Baptist recognizes the unborn Messiah. Elizabeth receives divine knowledge about who Mary's baby is - the Son of God. Elizabeth is the first person to call Mary's unborn child "Lord" a name reserved for God alone. Following a pregnant pause, like one might find in a good musical, Elizabeth belts out a song of blessing. She blesses Mary on two accounts. She is chosen to be the mother of the Lord and she believes that God will fulfill His promises. Mary has faith that what God told her will come true. She just has to wait for it.

God's promise is not fulfilled immediately. The tiny babe inside Mary grows and she waits. She puts her trust in the future God has for her and the world. The womb is dark and the future is uncertain, but the embryo takes shape, lives, and strengthens. There are nine months of waiting, hoping and trusting. The season of Advent is that kind of time. Advent teaches the people of God to wait, trust and hope even in times of darkness and uncertainty. Even in times when things on the surface seem to point to the contrary, we trust that something else is going on underneath the surface.

The entire Biblical witness teaches us this lesson as well. Wait. Trust God. Noah built the ark before the waters came, waiting on God to act despite the sunny blue skies and the disbelief of scoffing neighbors. Abraham was promised in his old age that he would become the father of

many. He trusted God, moved his family to a foreign land, and waited to see God's promises finally fulfilled with the birth of his son Isaac. Moses led the Hebrew people through the wilderness, a land full of uncertainty, emptiness, dryness and darkness. They waited to arrive and cross over into the Promised Land. Jonah waited in the belly of a whale tossed about in the ocean of an uncertain future. Mary heard the promise of the angel and waited to see the prophecy fulfilled. Lazarus waited in the darkness and death of the tomb before he was brought to life by Jesus.

Nature waits. The caterpillar waits in the chrysalis. The squirrel hibernates for the winter. The flower bulb lies dormant in the dark cool ground of the winter earth. The buried acorn waits to become an oak tree. Sometimes in life we must wait too. We wait in the darkness. (from Sue Monk Kidd's, *Waiting on God*)

Even though parts of life may seem uncertain today, or perhaps even bewildering, frightening, empty, dark or lonely. Trust God. Trust He is doing something. God is working for good in your circumstances. God is healing you, strengthening you, teaching you, growing you, preparing you, blessing you and transforming your situation. God is at work. You may just have to wait for it.

**Ask:** What would it mean for me to wait on God today and trust that He is working in a particular situation for my good? How can I believe that His promises for me will be fulfilled?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy and loving Lord, just as Elizabeth was filled with Your Holy Spirit, fill me as well. I open my heart to receive the divine gift of Your holy presence. Just as blessings poured from Elizabeth's lips, let blessings pour from my lips as well. Help me to have faith in Your goodness and trust in Your promises. Help me grow in my belief that You are working in my life, my circumstances, my relationships and my heart - working all things together for good. I wait. I wait for You to move. Amen.*