

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, December 5, 2024

By: Jan Davis

Today is Thursday, December 5 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

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble." Luke 1:50-52

REFLECTION

Mary's song is known as the Magnificat. Her song tells us about God. God can and will intervene in the world. God will set things right, even if it means turning the power structures of the world upside down. There is a reversal in Mary's song that pulls down the proud, mighty, rich and arrogant and lifts up the poor, forgotten, humble and lowly. God is the one who fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty. She reminds us to not set our sights on what the world values and chases, but keep ourselves focused on God and the things of God.

Mary's song tells us who God is. He is merciful, strong, just and compassionate. Mary's song tells us what God will do - He will set the world right. He will bring justice. God's purposes for the world will ultimately triumph. Mary's song teaches us how to wait and trust God to do what He promises.

Mary lives in an "in-between" time - between the time of the promise of the angel and the time of the birth of her Son. There is a promise of a birth, but the birth is not here yet. We also live in an in-between time. We live between the pivotal moments of history - of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the time of His promised return. God's kingdom has come, but it is not here yet. God's plan is working in the world for good, but the plan is not fully realized. Things are good, but they are still becoming. We look forward to the time promised in the book of Revelation, when there is a new heaven and a new earth, when there is no more mourning,

crying or pain, when goodness triumphs over evil and the world is set right. God is not finished yet.

Advent is the in-between time after Thanksgiving and before Christmas. Advent is a season of waiting, trusting God in the darkness, knowing God is preparing the world and preparing our hearts and lives for whatever is next.

Are you living in an in-between time? We survive in the space between the past and the future. We live between the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025. Perhaps you are in-between academic semesters, in-between jobs, in-between relationships, in-between homes or in-between seasons of your life. Maybe there is something in your life that requires waiting. Perhaps you are uncertain about a part of your future, wondering what is next. Maybe you are not sure which path to take or which decision is best. Wait on God. Trust Him in the in-between time. Have faith that He is with you. He knows what is best for you at this age and stage of your journey. As we wait for Christmas, Advent teaches us how to wait and how to trust God.

Ask: What are the in-between places of my current life? How well do I trust God in seasons of waiting? How can I grow in my faith?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy and loving Lord, I join my voice with Mary's voice and I sing songs of praise to You. My soul glorifies You and my spirit rejoices in You. You have done great things for me and I am blessed. Your name is holy and Your love is mighty. Extend Your mercy to me and those I love. Send Your good blessings down through the generations of my family. Reverse the injustices and right the wrongs of this world. I put my faith and trust in You and You alone. Amen.