

The Gospel According to Luke

“Speaking Words of Knowledge” Chapter 1:39-56

Introduction

Mary’s visit to Elizabeth was downright Pentecostal:

1. Elizabeth is described as “filled with the Holy Spirit.”
2. She supernaturally received information from God about Mary’s pregnancy.
3. She then uttered what amounts to a prophecy about Mary’s baby.
4. Elizabeth’s own baby, himself filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother’s womb, gets to leaping around inside of his mom.
5. Mary broke out into a spiritual song of worship filled with prophecies.

The meeting of these two moms is a unique moment in Christian history. There had never been anything quite like it, nor would there ever be again. One was carrying the forerunner, John the Baptist, who would introduce the other, Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

It was also a meeting of two simple, ordinary believers – two sisters in the Lord - who wished to encourage one another in their service to God. On that level we can enter into the meeting ourselves and find application to our own lives.

For example: You could describe the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth using the words of the apostle Paul from Ephesians 5:18-19, where he said,

Ephesians 5:18 ...be filled with the Spirit,
Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

They were all “filled with the Spirit”; and Mary at least was speaking in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

You are to all be “filled with the Spirit”; **you** are to speak to one another in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

We’ll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 The Holy Spirit Will Supply The Words As You Speak To Yourself, and #2 The Holy Spirit Has Supplied The Word For You To Speak To Yourself.

#1 The Holy Spirit Will Supply The Words
As You Speak To Yourself
(v39-45)

There are some intimidating exhortations to believers about how you are to speak to yourselves. We’ve just said you are to speak to yourselves with “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” The apostle Paul also wrote,

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

The apostle Peter said,

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever...

If you’re thinking this is impossible, *you’re on the right track!* It **is** impossible - unless you are filled with the Holy Spirit and let Him supply the words as you speak to yourselves.

The good news is that Jesus has given you the Holy Spirit. If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit lives within you. Among His many ministries is the ability to supply you with words of encouragement for your brothers and sisters. He did it for Mary and Elizabeth; He can do it for you.

Luke 1:39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,

Mary was no older than fifteen. The angel Gabriel had told her that her cousin, Elizabeth, had conceived in her old age. The angel evidently meant it to encourage Mary to visit Elizabeth.

She did so “[with haste](#).” We would say she was in a *hurry* to get there. It is a mark of any good servant that they be in a hurry to set out on their assignment. There must be a zeal, an eagerness, in serving the Lord.

I want to re-emphasize Mary’s young age. There are quite a few kids and teenagers in the Bible that distinguish themselves:

1. Daniel and his three friends were teenagers when taken captive into Babylon; yet they served the Lord faithfully.
2. Jeremiah was young when God called him to be His prophet (Jeremiah 1:13).
3. Samuel, Israel’s first prophet, was a very young boy when his ministry began.

We should expect more from our kids. God can use them; He is speaking to them; they can take their stand with God against sin and selfishness, and against the surrounding culture. Too often we sell kids short in terms of their spirituality.

[Luke 1:40 \[Mary\] entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.](#)

[Luke 1:41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.](#)

“[Leaped](#)” is a word used to describe the jumping of certain animals. It was a pretty intense movement. John the Baptist was unborn, about three months from delivery... But he was praising God in his mother’s womb!

It was all John could do in the womb to express praise for God. You may find yourself in a closed or compact environment where there seems little you can do to express praise for God; trapped, as it were. For example: Some employers discourage you from sharing your faith. Or maybe you are married to an unbeliever who is against your faith. Or maybe you are a young person, the only believer in your

household. Let God show you how you can leap within your circumstances.

“Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” She did not leap; she spoke Spirit-anointed words.

Luke 1:42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!

Luke 1:43 But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luke 1:44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

The first thing to realize is that Elizabeth had no idea Mary was even pregnant; but as soon as Mary arrived, the Holy Spirit told Elizabeth that her cousin was with child, and that the child was the promised Messiah.

The Bible calls this a Word of Knowledge. It is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit described later in the New Testament. It is knowledge of a person or situation that is not learned but is given to you directly by God.

Notice how the Word of Knowledge operates. It is given to Elizabeth and we call it her gift; but it is really for the benefit of Mary. Young Mary, still trying to put into perspective the trial of her pregnancy and what it would mean for her socially, would have been greatly encouraged that God had supernaturally told Elizabeth of her situation!

Elizabeth delivered this Word of Knowledge by repeating some things that the angel Gabriel had said to Mary: That she would be “blessed... among women” and that in her womb she would carry the “Lord.” This Word of Knowledge was for Mary’s encouragement. These are *not* words for us to speak to Mary.

Elizabeth was also very obviously pregnant, in her sixth month. She spoke of the baby in her womb. All of this further confirmed everything Gabriel had told Mary. All of this would have greatly encouraged the young virgin.

Then Elizabeth said,

Luke 1:45 Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

“**Blessed**” is a word that can confuse us. We think of a person set-apart from others by God because of their personal purity. It really means you have the *fullness*, or *filling*, of God. It means that you can be satisfied regardless your circumstances because you have God filling your heart.

Mary could enjoy this fullness; and she would see the “fulfillment” of everything promised to her. Those two words form a good summary of the Christian life: fullness and fulfillment. God will fulfill all He has promised; you may as well enjoy His fullness along the way.

Elizabeth had a Word of Knowledge. It was a gift given to her by the Holy Spirit, but it was for Mary. It was to encourage Mary and build her up in her faith. Some of you need to discover your gifts. Some of you will have the Word of Knowledge. Whatever your gift or gifts, they operate to serve others – to encourage and build them up.

#2 The Holy Spirit Has Supplied The Word For You To Speak To Yourself (v46-56)

As the story turns to Mary, I want to look back on verse thirty-nine for a moment. Mary’s journey to the “hill country,” to “a city of Judah,” was about an eighty mile, four-day trip. I want to suggest to you that as she traveled, **she spoke to herself**. Look at verse forty-six:

Luke 1:46 And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord,

When Mary said “my soul,” she used a phrase from the psalms. Often a psalmist would describe meditating upon God’s Word as if he was speaking to his own soul – speaking to himself. Let me give you just two of many possible instances:

Psalm 42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him *for* the help of His countenance.

Psalm 146:1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!

The psalmist spoke to his own soul, telling himself to hope in God and to praise Him. He discovered truths about God in the Word and then told himself what to do.

Mary used the phrase, “my soul,” in this same way. While traveling, she spoke to herself. She spoke to herself after reading or meditating upon God’s Word. I know God’s Word was prominent on her four-day journey because, in her song, she made at least fifteen references to Old Testament passages. Her words are especially reminiscent of Hannah’s song of praise found in First Samuel chapter two. Hannah was a barren woman who promised God she would dedicate a child to the Lord. God granted her request; she gave birth to Samuel and brought him to serve in the Temple where he grew to be Israel’s first prophet.

The application for you is to be filled with God’s Word and speak to yourself.

Mary’s song is called ‘*The Magnificat*,’ which is the Latin word translated “magnify” in verse forty-six. You’ll notice that the things she sang about had not yet occurred, but she sang about them in the past tense as if they had already occurred. Scholars call this the ‘prophetic past-tense,’ meaning it hasn’t happened but it most certainly will because God has prophesied it.

The first few verses are more personal; the rest are prophetic.

Luke 1:46 And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord,
Luke 1:47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

“Soul” and “spirit” are two words describing the same thing – the true, inner person. If you will “magnify the Lord,” then you will rejoice in God as your Savior regardless your personal circumstances.

“Magnify” means *to enlarge*. You need to enlarge your thinking about God in terms of what He has ultimately promised you; then look back upon your life from the future.

Luke 1:48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

Luke 1:49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy *is* His name.

Luke 1:50 And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

Mary's service was unique in the history of the world. Still, she is not to be revered, adored, or worshipped. She needed to be saved; she offered herself as God's servant; she served by God's "**mighty**" power; her empowered service impacted future generations.

All of these same things can be true of your unique service to God:

1. You need to be saved.
2. You can offer yourself as God's servant.
3. God can give you His "**mighty**" power – whatever is sufficient to accomplish your specific task.
4. Your service impacts future generations of Christians – whether in your personal family, or your Church family.

The remaining verses of Mary's song are prophetic:

Luke 1:51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Luke 1:52 He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones, and exalted *the* lowly.

Luke 1:53 He has filled *the* hungry with good things, and *the* rich He has sent away empty.

Luke 1:54 He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of *His* mercy,

Luke 1:55 As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever."

Again I remind you that these things speak of the future as if it were already accomplished. Whatever God has promised is sure and certain to happen.

These are prophecies of God's future dealings upon the earth. They look past the first coming of Jesus to His Second Coming. Jesus will return to establish the kingdom promised all over the pages of the Old Testament. In that kingdom of heaven on earth things will be switched-up:

1. There will be a moral reversal when the “proud” are overthrown. Instead of morality being determined by the “imagination of their [wicked] hearts,” Jesus will rule with purity.
2. There will be a social reversal when those unbelievers who are now considered “mighty” are removed in favor of the “lowly” believers.
3. There will be a material reversal when those who are “rich” with this world’s goods will be “empty,” while those who are now poor and “hungry” will be satisfied.

Verses fifty-four and fifty-five remind you that God will most definitely keep all His promises to the physical descendants of Abraham – to the Jews. Much of world history, and much in current history, revolves around the Jews and Jerusalem.

Mary finished singing and you read,

[Luke 1:56](#) And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

God had supplied Mary with His Word; in her case, it was especially the passage in First Samuel about Hannah’s special pregnancy. She meditated upon the story and then spoke to her soul about it; she encouraged herself from God’s Word. In her case, she wrote a song.

God has supplied **you** His Word. Read it; meditate upon it; let it fill your heart. As you do you will be speaking to yourself and God will make your heart a place of melody and harmony – regardless your outward circumstances.

Conclusion

I’d like to think that these two sisters in the Lord continued in this same spirit of encouragement and praise. It was like a three-month long believers meeting!

We should be speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. If we are not, perhaps we have no melody in our hearts.

We should never speak corrupt words, but only those that build-up others. We speak as God's oracle. If God anoints our speaking, such as with the Word of Knowledge, it is for others – that they might be strengthened.

Our fellowship with one another should be one long believers meeting until Jesus comes to bring us all home.