Luke 1:46-47 Then Mary said, My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, 47and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.”

The text before us is awesome. This text contains not one, but two wonderful and interesting confessions about salvation. That’s right, confessions. In this case we are speaking of confessions of faith. But if you grasp the moment and the history you understand these are statements of belief in things that haven’t been yet. Welcome to the power of God.

The first confession is from Elizabeth. It is not often that we consider her words or the event that caused them but they are worthy of note.

The second confession is from Mary. We have been singing the words of this text our entire lives. It is typically called “The Song of Mary” or “The Magnificat.” This song is now a normal part of our Evening Prayer service. I hope it is clear to all what a marvel the events and words of our text are. Our theme will be: **TWO CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.**

Now before we talk about the wonder of the song of Mary and her words, let’s just take a moment to breathe in the majesty of the miracle that is found in this text and to contemplate its wonder along with the words of Elizabeth. It is this miracle that sets off all the confessions that will come.

The miracle I am referring to happens as Mary enters the house of her relative Elizabeth and calls out a greeting. Remember, Elizabeth is pregnant with John the Baptist, at least 6, maybe 7 months along at this point. Mary, of course, is also with child from God the Lord. She is carrying Jesus the Savior of the world. The miracle is found in that little line that says, **“The baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”**

I know, like the world, we just want to think, “Hey, the baby moved around and Elizabeth is just being over reactive.” No! The Scripture tells us the baby leaped in her womb. The Scripture tells us that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Just those words alone help us to grasp that it is the Holy Spirit who is also at work in the baby of the womb. For that matter, Elizabeth’s words help us to see the wonder of what is going on here.

Elizabeth says, by the Holy Spirit, **“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”** Elizabeth is filled with marvel at Mary. Although we have no evidence that Elizabeth was aware of the angel appearing to Mary and the promise of what the angel said, note that Elizabeth seems to know what is going on. She pronounces Mary “blessed.” Now, who could be the carrier of the Son of God, giving birth in virginity and not be called “blessed?” Blessed is the action of God not the state of Mary. Note that Elizabeth remarks that the baby in the womb of Mary is also a blessing. How does she know that? What’s so big about a young woman having a baby? Yet, by divine knowledge Elizabeth understands what Jesus will be and that this baby Jesus in the womb is something unique and wonderful.

The truth of what has just been said is revealed even more in the next line. Elizabeth says, **“But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”** Again marvel at what the Holy Spirit can do. These words seem to indicate that Elizabeth didn’t know Mary was coming for a visit. If she didn’t know she was coming for a visit, how does she know of the baby? Yet look at the words. At this moment she knows that Mary is with child, not any child, but she is moved to confess that Mary is the mother **“of my Lord.”** No mistaking the words. Elizabeth fully grasps that the baby in the womb of Mary is the Son of God and the Savior of the world, yes, her Savior! This wisdom and knowledge could only have been given through and by the Holy Spirit who is, in this moment, working in her.

Look at her next line. **“In fact, just now, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy!”** With these words Elizabeth is actually confessing that the movement of her baby in her womb is not something normal. It is called a “leap”, more to the point, it is called a **“leap of joy.”** This baby in the womb is, in the only way he can, giving testimony to the wonder of Jesus. Giving witness to the fact that the nearby baby in the next womb is a baby that brings and causes joy. Elizabeth’s baby has that joy. The joy of the Savior. The joy of eternal life and salvation in Jesus even though he is but a sixth month old baby in the womb.

Now, for those of you out there in the Christian world who like to limit the power and wonder of the Holy Spirit, what do you do with this? A baby, a sixth month old baby in the womb is actually giving testimony to the total marvel of Jesus. Read what is said here and then tell me that the Holy Spirit can’t work faith in an infant, that the Holy Spirit can’t change the heart and sinful nature of children unless they reach “an age of consent,” a teaching that you have made up? It is clear that the baby and Elizabeth, by the power of the Holy Spirit, both grasp the presence and joy that Jesus will and is going to bring to this world! The power and work of the Holy Spirit is not limited in any way.

And yet one final statement of Elizabeth to think of. **“Blessed is she who has believed, because the promises spoken to her from the Lord will be fulfilled.”** Again the marvel of God’s Holy Spirit working. If Elizabeth didn’t know Mary was coming to visit, how does she know what has transpired with Mary? Yet, she seems to know that God has told Mary that she would conceive and give birth to the Son of God. This would be a miracle. A virgin would give birth. Do you remember Mary’s reply to the angel as he gave her promises about what was coming? Mary had said, **“I am the Lord’s servant. May it happen to me as you have said.”**

I have always taught that those words of Mary were her agreeing with what God had in store for her and her life. But those words are also Mary’s way of saying it had to be a “virgin” birth. Pious, believing Mary was not going to break any 6th commandment of God! She will be a virgin giving birth and nothing else. Elizabeth is acknowledging the solid faith of Mary, her trust in the power of God and her trust that what God promises is always so! A great example for us to follow. Always trust in God and God alone.

Whew! That’s the first song. Here comes the next. Mary is the one who speaks these words. And yes, it is clear that Mary is also speaking under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit of God. They are most worthy words to contemplate. First, **“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.”** Here is praise to God for keeping his promise. God has worked a miracle on Mary. A baby, a son is to be born and she is still a virgin. God has done this powerful and wonderful thing and is worthy of praise from Mary. (If you clearly understood the problems that such a birth was going to give Mary and Joseph in their life you would marvel at these words. For no matter what Mary and Joe say, they will look like adulterers and be treated like adulterers by the Jews around them. This virgin birth will make them in the eyes of their world those among the lowest of the low!)

Next, notice that Mary gives praise, is filled with joy because she grasps that Jesus is her God and her Savior from sin. That is the only reason for Mary to speak the words found here. She knows her son will bring salvation to the world and yes, even bring salvation to her with his sacrificial death and his forgiveness of sins. These words tell us that contrary to what some would like to teach, Mary herself was not holy and without sin. She had and needed a Savior, her Son!

She next says, **“Because he has looked with favor on the humble state of his servant.”** With these words Mary again confesses to the grace of God in her life. She is a low and humble sinner but God of his grace has given her the greatest blessing there could be. She would be the Savior’s mother, remembered and fondly consider for the rest of this world’s existence.

Her next words reinforce that idea. **“Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed, because the Almighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.”** Notice Mary only acknowledges God’s greatness. She will be viewed favorably in history because of the child she will give birth to. But it is God who has done it all. It is God’s holiness and power to be acknowledged. She calls no blessing upon herself but only gives praise and thanks to God.

That this understanding is what Mary means is clear by her next words: **“His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown the strength of his arm. He has scattered those who are proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones. He has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent away empty.”**

I will try my best to help you with the total awe of these words. Mary has just declared the grace and mercy of God. She grasps and shares with us that God pours his mercy upon those who are filled with his awe and power, with his grace and love. This whole section of Mary’s words is nothing but praise, glory and thanks to God for his power, his grace, his promises and His fulfilling of all promises for the world. Promises that are forever. Promises that impact forever.

It is helpful in trying to understand these words of Mary if you have a more complete grasp of God’s Old Testament promises. Mary speaks of the “arm of the Lord.” Time and time again the phrase “arm of the Lord” is the instrument of his deliverance and power. For instance, in Exodus 6:6 the Lord says to the people: **“I am the Lord. I will bring you out from under the forced labor of the Egyptians. I will deliver you from being their slaves. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.”** Psalm 77:14-15 says, **“You are the God who performs a wonderful deed. You made known your power among the peoples. With your arm you redeemed your people.”** Remember, the Exodus and all that happened there was a foreshadowing of Jesus and what he would do. Jesus is that arm of the Lord. Jesus is the power of God that has indeed brought forth God’s full and eternal redemption.

Or the idea that God will bring down rulers from their thrones. Just turn to Psalm 2 and read what is said there. The world tries to oppose God and his Anointed One. But God will scoff. God will have the last word. And the wonderful lines: **“You will smash them with an iron rod. You will break them to pieces like pottery.”** Throughout the Old Testament it is made clear that God is in control and that no matter what the world thinks or does, God will and does have the upper hand, especially in Jesus, who is now called “The Lord of lords and the King of kings.”

But I think the greatest of these words are those last ones spoken. **“He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.”** These words are simply a reference to the many and numerous promises of God to save His people from their sins. And even from the beginning of the promises of God it was clear that this salvation would be done and accomplished solely and only because of God’s mercy. Today we say it is “God’s grace.” Yes, because of God’s grace and God’s promise of a Savior in Jesus Christ, God will bring eternal life and salvation to the world. These words remind us that Jesus is the complete fulfillment of the gracious promises of God to forgive our sins and save our souls. It is all being done, started with this baby in the womb of a virgin who is Christ the Lord.

Seriously, isn’t it amazing! How could these women have known all that would be in the baby that is carried by Mary? Yet, look at what they say. He is the Savior. He is the fulfillment of God’s promises. He is our hope and our comfort forever. He is Jesus. Jesus come to save. Jesus come to reveal God’s total grace. Jesus come to bring the gift of eternal life and salvation because of what He will do and accomplish. Jesus our Savior.

Thanks be to God and to Jesus for this wonderful gift, highlighted in wonderful words by two women who though they know little, are moved to proclaim the greatness of the Lord in the gift of Jesus. Amen.