

Sermon for Advent Mid-week #3

Date: December 16, 2020

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 66:1-2

Epistle Reading: James 4:6-10

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:46-55



Sermon Text: Luke 1:46-55

Sermon Title: For You, to Bear Your Flesh in Weakness

Hymns:

LSB 332 – Savior of the Nations, Come (v.1,6,7,8)

LSB 933 – My Soul Rejoices

LSB 934 – My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord

LSB 352 – Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord (v.1,2,5,6)

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



Pastor James Groleau
St. John's Lutheran Church
1200 13th Avenue NW
Austin, MN 55912
Office: (507) 433-2642
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org
Phone Streaming at: 518-906-1379
KAUS 1480 AM Sun. 9:00am



Text: Luke 1:46–55

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

NOTE: Copyright information.

Bible Translation: GOD’S WORD®, © 1995 God’s Word to the Nations. Some readings have been adapted to better reflect the original Greek or Hebrew.

Credit for Images:

Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

© 2020 Pastor James Groleau.

Permission is granted to use these sermons for any non-profit purpose. I only ask that credit, as to their origination, be noted appropriately.

Grace to you, and peace, in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Mark Twain wrote a book called "*The Prince and the Pauper*." It is an enduring story; it has given birth to numerous movies and plays. It is about a prince who is tired of the restrictions of royal life, longing for the freedom to live as a common man. When he finds a pauper who looks just like him, it's the perfect opportunity to switch places.

The high and the low switching places is just what Mary has on her mind. Her song of praise, the Magnificat, proclaims however, that change comes differently. She sings about how the mighty are cast down from their thrones and the rich go empty away. Then she recalls how the lowly are exalted. That appeals to our sense of justice. Let the successful see what it's like! Let the downtrodden have it easy. That's not what God has in mind. His goal is a far grander exchange.

This is a far greater exchange because Jesus is far more than a prince. He is the very Lord whom Mary magnifies. Everything she give as reason to magnify the Lord is true of Jesus. Mary says of the Lord, "Holy is His name."¹ Jesus' name is so holy that it is the only name given under heaven by which we can be saved.² Mary says that the Lord is to be feared.³ When Jesus heals a paralytic,⁴ when He raises the widow's son,⁵ and when He exorcises a legion of demons from a man,⁶ He is feared. Mary says that the Lord humbles the mighty. Jesus would regularly stop the mouths of those whose pride led them to believe they could get the better of Him. Like it was with the devil when he tempted Jesus,⁷ and the scribes and Pharisees when they tried to trap Jesus in His words.⁸ The Sadducees faced the same thing.⁹ Jesus stopped them all. Their longing for power was put down. Their lust and greed for authority was denied.

Jesus is far more than a prince. He is God. Yet here He comes with such humility. As Mary speaks these words, He is small and vulnerable, though the Greatest of all. His greatness is just not what we expect. His greatness is found in His weakness. Jesus is great enough to take on human flesh so that He can take our place. His greatness will be manifest when He appears His weakest, hanging on a cross. There He is at His greatest, His strongest, strong to save. The very, and only, thing we need.

1 Luke 1:49

2 Acts 4:12

3 Luke 1:50

4 Luke 5:26

5 Luke 7:16

6 Luke 8:37

7 Luke 4:1-13

8 Luke 20:1-8, 19-26

9 Luke 20:27-40

This is a far greater exchange, because we are less than paupers. A pauper is defined by his empty hands, his poverty. That is all of us. Mary rejoices that though we are humble, the Lord looks on us.¹⁰ In that humility, we recognize our profound and utter dependence on God for everything.

Martin Luther's last words speak so clearly to this. He died with a scrap of paper in his hand. It closes with, "we are beggars; this is true."¹¹ That humble statement is an exalted thing to say, when you know from Whom you beg. Empty hands before the Lord are quickly filled. Mary says that the Lord fills the hungry with good things.¹²

We are hungry beggars, paupers with open empty hands before the Lord. Yet it is not just that we are lacking. We also bring something with us. We bring our sin. Jesus humbles Himself to become human. Even more He humbles Himself to take our sin on Himself. With our sin, He takes our death, on a cross.

This is a far greater exchange. Jesus now identifies with you. In *The Prince and Pauper* they find out that the other's life is not as grand as they expected, so they are ready to go back to their given place in life. Jesus knows what He is getting into when He identifies with sinful humanity. He knows it will lead Him to a cross. We, on the other hand, find out that His place, a place of righteousness and peace with our heavenly Father, is a wonderful thing. It is the good thing with which He fills us. Even better is that we do not have to go back to the way things were. Even after His death and resurrection, Jesus retains His human nature in His glorified, sinless body. That means Jesus is ever *for you*. He knows what you face because He has faced it Himself. He draws near to strengthen you when you beaten down by sin and sin's affect. Even when you do not recognize His presence, He is there with strength and forgiveness. He is *for you*. He gives His body and blood, *for you*, so you can have peace in the knowledge that salvation has comes.¹³

This is a far greater exchange. In Jesus you are more than a prince. You are a child of God who dwells with the Father for eternity. Mary sings, "He fills the hungry with good things."¹⁴ In Christ, you are full of the Lord's good things: His righteousness, His mercy, His promises, His eternal life, His sonship with the Father. He became weak so that you are made strong. Strong in the face of sin and

10 Luke 1:48

11 Written in *German* and *Latin*. *Wir sind alle Bettler. Hoc est verum.*

12 Luke 1:53

13 John 6:53-55 – Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

14 Luke 1:53

sin's attack. You have received His mercy. Though you stand in the face of death you have received His eternal life.

In this great exchange, God Himself takes up residence in Mary's womb so that He might rob you of your sin, and pour into you His righteousness and mercy, Mary rejoices, and for good reason. This great exchange exceeds all others. What more reason could we ever have to sing! The Savior came in meekness, for you, to bear your flesh in weakness.

Praise His holy name.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**

