

Responding to God's Grace

Luke 1:46-56 (Read 1:26-56)

Halifax: 26 December 2010

Introduction

For the next couple of weeks, we are going to take a little break from our sermon series in Isaiah.

- We are right in the middle of one of the most significant chapters in the entire prophecy in which our Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us as the Suffering Servant who bore the penalty of our sins.
 - As a significant portion of our congregation will be away this week and next for the Christmas and New Years holidays,
 - I thought it would be good for us to do as we often do and turn our thoughts to consider these seasonal topics.
- And so for this reason, we are going to look at the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ this morning.
 - More specifically, we are going to look at Mary's response to God's grace as a paradigm of the whole church's response to the river of God's redemptive grace as it flows to us from one generation to another.
 - God's work of redemption is one that unfolds over time, and as it does, the church responds to His grace with heartfelt praise and rejoicing.
 - Although we live in a time when we have seen much more of God's redemptive work unfolded,
 - Mary's Spirit inspired response helps us see how all who believe respond to God as His plan is unfolded.
 - In fact, as those who have seen more of God's grace than Mary had seen when she made this response,
 - We ought to have an even greater depth of admiration of God and joy in Him than Mary had!
 - As Jesus put it when He spoke of John the Baptist whom He called the greatest of the prophets up until that day,
 - "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than He."
 - He made it clear that the grace of God that was about to be displayed in the cross and resurrection would far surpass what had hither-to-for been seen.

TRANS> And so I want to begin this morning by showing you how:

I. Mary represents the Church living under grace.

- First we will look at what it means to live under God's grace, and then we look at how Mary's response is the response of all who truly believe.

A. What does it mean to live under God's grace?

1. Living under God's grace means that you are among those who have been singled out to receive God's blessing.
 - You know how God first appeared to Abraham.
 - The Lord came to him and He promised that He would bless him.
 - He promised to be a God to him and to his descendents after him.
 - It was a most remarkable thing!
 - God had just visited the families of the earth (destined to become nations) with judgement at Babel.
 - He had visited them in their pride as they endeavoured to bless themselves without looking to God for the redemption that He had promised from the fall...
 - namely, that He would bring forth a son to the woman who would crush the serpent's head...
 - Satan is the serpent you know, the dragon who led Adam and Eve to do what the men at Babel were doing...
 - to try to obtain blessing for themselves without submission to the Lord!
 - Now right then and there, Adam and all of his descendents should have looked to God for that promise!
 - It was such a wise plan of redemption because it challenged them right at the point where they had fallen...
 - It called them to do what they should have done before the fall—to look to the LORD for blessing...
 - Though now it called them all the more because if offered to pick them from the depths of rebellion into which they had fallen!
 - The promised Son would come to crush the one who had led them into their pride so that they could submit to God the way people ought to submit to God.
 - He would do all that had to be done now that they were fallen so that they were all the more in need of God's help.
 - But instead of looking to the Lord for His promise of grace and trusting in Him to redeem them,
 - Mankind kept on pursuing blessing apart from God.
 - Already, there had been the great flood by which the Lord had expressed His displeasure with their folly...

- And now there had been Babel where He had scattered them and frustrated their plans to find blessing without their Creator and Redeemer.
 - It was such a wicked thing for them to resist His grace!
- All the while, He is the life giving God who had made them and who upheld them and for whom they had been made,
 - and here even though they had fallen,
 - He had promised to send this seed of the woman to crush the Serpent and the rebellion that He had led.
 - But rather than repenting and looking to the promise,
 - the great mass of them continued to follow the serpent who was to be destroyed!
 - And so here at Babel, God shows them how futile it is for them to seek blessing apart from His grace.
- Abraham represents one of those families that had just been judged at Babel, and that had just felt the displeasure of the LORD.
 - He was no different than the rest of them...
 - But the LORD comes to Abraham and singles him out as one upon whom He is going to bestow His blessing!
 - Despite what Abraham had been, God was going to pour out His grace on him and on his descendents and bless them.
 - It was an amazing promise!
 - Grace would be given to the undeserving!
 - And the LORD even promised that He would bless all the nations (those families that had been scattered at Babel) through the Son that would be born to Abraham.
 - He would gather them together to be blessed in Abraham's seed—that is, in Jesus Christ.

TRANS> So what does it mean to live under God's grace?

2. Learn from this that you live under grace when you look to God' redemptive blessing that comes through the Son that He promised to Abraham—and before that to Adam and Eve.
 - When Paul writes his epistle to the Romans, he tells us that those from every nation who look to Christ by faith receive the blessing of His grace.
 - They are not under law, but under grace!

- That means that rather than being given what they deserve as those who are part of the rebellion against God,
 - they are given redemptive grace that saves!
 - By grace, they are accounted as righteous even though they are not righteous.
 - Not on the basis of works that they have done, but on the basis of the redemptive work of Christ which they look to for salvation.
 - God changes them by grace so that they turn to Jesus Christ for salvation.
 - He changes them so that they seek blessing from Him instead of from themselves.
 - And those who are chosen to receive this grace are not chosen on the basis of anything good in them.
 - It is just like it was with Abraham.
 - It is free grace that God gives to them...
 - In other words, He comes to them and imparts His blessing of redemption on those who would, if left to themselves, have spurned His offer of grace.
 - It is not as if they are not involved at all when He does this,
 - He tells them of their need and of His promise and calls them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ... and they repent and believe...
 - But the only reason they do is because the LORD comes to them with His powerful grace that renews their hearts so that they will receive His grace.
 - The natural man, if left to Himself, will always reject the gospel, no matter how powerfully it may be presented to Him.
 - If you believe, it is because the LORD renewed you so that you would respond to the call of the gospel.
 - Yet, the offer is there for all—if you come, you will not be cast out.
3. Now I want you to understand that throughout the ages, God has a people who are singled out to receive His grace.
- a. They are the elect, chosen to obtain His salvation that no one deserves...
 - And over the years, God has called them together into His church.
 - Not all who are members of the visible church are elect, but they are among the elect.
 - There are those who are part of the church in the way that chaff is part of the grain.

- The grain is what is being kept, but the chaff is there for a time until it is separated out by the Lord.
- b. But you see, as the years roll on, the church, and in particular the elect, have the river of God's grace continually flow to them...
- It began with the promise of the woman's seed...
 - It flowed to Noah and his family when God singled them out for grace and blessing in a world that had spurned the grace of God...
 - It flowed to Abraham as God unfolded the promise of the son who would bless the nations...
 - It flowed to Israel under the leadership of Moses when the LORD showed them that He was the LORD who redeems by delivering them out of Egypt and making His promises known to them through the ceremonies of the Law.
 - The elect among them were a people who were waiting for the Son that God had promised.
 - It flowed to them as they rebelled and God raised up David to restore them and then they rebelled again and He raised up prophets and He delivered them from exile...
 - And then in the fullness of time, it flowed to them—to all of us who know this grace—when God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, to redeem the nations by the cross!
 - And this grace continues to flow to us as He gathers the nations to Him for salvation...
 - And it will flow to us at last when the Son returns to deliver the final blow to Satan's head and to destroy all those who are in league with Him.
 - And then we who are the recipients of this grace will have the eternal inheritance that God has promised...
 - His blessing will flow to us without intermission forever and ever in all its fullness!
 - The elect are those on whom God pours out the blessing of His redemptive grace!

TRANS> But now with all that as a background it is about time I got to our text where we see how Mary receives God's grace.

B. Mary represents the whole church in receiving God's grace.

1. In particular, she represents us in the great moment in history when God first sent forth His Son to be born of her!
 - a. You see in Luke 1:26 how the LORD sent the angel Gabriel to her to tell her that she was to bring forth the Christ!
 - Luke 1:26-33: Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was

Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favoured one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

- b. What an amazing thing!
 - God had promised that a Son would be given to His people and that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Him and in Him.
 - He will be given the throne of David!
 - He will set up a kingdom of righteousness that will never end!
 - He will be the Son of the Highest—the very Son of God.
 - He will be Yahweh who saves (that is what the name Jesus means)
 - And now the moment in history had come that this child was to be born—and He was to be born to Mary!
 - God was visiting His people with the salvation that He had promised!
 - He was visiting His people with His saving grace!

TRANS> We could spend a ton of time on this passage, but my main focus is on Mary's response to all this.

- And so I want to move on and...
2. Show you how Mary responds to God's grace that has come to her and to all His people at this momentous point in history...
- Her response is given to us in verses 46-56.
 - a. And in the first two verses she tells us two things that she does...two things that go together...two things that all who receive the grace of God do...
 - She says that she magnifies the Lord and that she rejoices in Him as her Saviour.
 - Look at verse 46-47:
 - Luke 1:46-47: "And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour."
 - 1) To magnify the LORD in your soul means to have enlarged thoughts of Him...
 - You see Him as greater and more magnificent than you have every seen Him before!

- It is not that you make Him out to be greater than He actually is (you can't do that), but rather that you begin to see how excellent He is!
- We are blinded by our sin and we cannot see His glory and really appreciate all that He is!
 - But as His grace flows to us, we are given a greater and greater grasp of Him!
 - Our thoughts of Him and our conception of Him begins to move closer to closer to what He truly is!
 - As His grace flows to us more and more, we see His perfections and His excellence!
- Isn't that the way it is with anything?
 - A student begins his studies—say in biology—and after his first year, he feels like he knows all there is to know about the subject.
 - But then when he goes on for his masters, he realises that there is a whole lot more to it...
 - and when he goes for a PhD and begins to study in one very narrow area of the great subject, he has an even better appreciation of the vastness of the field.
 - So it is in getting to know a great person...
 - You may be impressed with them initially, but as you get to know them more and more, your love and appreciation for them grows...
 - especially if they are sacrificing for you and showing kindness to you...
 - Your thoughts are enlarged.
 - And that is how it was with Mary when she came to understand that the LORD was sending His Son through her to save His people!
 - She saw the glory of God as she had never seen it before!
 - Like the Queen of Sheba when she came to see Solomon, she felt that the half had not been told to her of the glory she now saw!

TRANS> So Mary magnifies the LORD in her soul...

- 2) The second thing she does is closely related to that...
 - She rejoices in God her Saviour.
 - In Luke 1:47, she says,
 - Luke 1:47: "And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour."

- She rejoices in her God who has blessed her with salvation!
 - Let's be honest here—we don't always rejoice in the LORD the way we should, do we?
 - But as we more and more experience His salvation, both as individuals and as the church in history,
 - we come to enjoy Him more and more!
 - We realise that while our affections have often worked quite well in the past—
 - Perhaps we have had affection for another person—for our husband or our wife...
 - Perhaps we have greatly enjoyed our hobbies or a vacation or technology or sports...
 - Or perhaps we have rejoiced in great literature or music or some other form of the arts...
 - but we realise that there is an even greater enjoyment to be found in the one who created all these things and gave them to us!
 - Perhaps you are here today and you have never come to enjoy your God...
 - That is certainly possible.
 - We are cut off from Him by our sin, and it is only when we become the recipients of His grace that we begin to truly rejoice in Him!
 - How could you rejoice in the one who condemns you?
 - How could you rejoice in the one who has cast you out of His presence as a wretched, unclean sinner?
 - How could you rejoice in the One who has cursed you and inflicted you with pain and sorrow for your sin?
 - There is only one way that you can rejoice in Him...
 - When, like Mary, you become a recipient of His saving grace...
 - When you look to the Son God has given and find forgiveness and eternal life in Him!
 - Then what joy there is to be found in your God!

TRANS> Of course with Mary, she already knew His grace, but now she knows it far more!

- b. These two things that Mary does here—magnifying the LORD and rejoicing in God her Saviour...

- are what our Catechism refers to as the chief and highest end of man:
 - to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever!
 - And I say that we glorify Him by the way we live and the way we speak about Him to others...
 - but all of this is just an empty show if we are not like Mary who says that her soul magnifies Him and that her spirit rejoices in Him...
 - In other words, she glorifies Him from the very core of her.
 - It is from within that she magnifies God and enjoys Him.
 - To put this in the language of the greatest commandment,
 - She loves Him with all her heart, with all her soul, and with all her strength!
 - There is a sincerity within because she has come to see His blessing and grace with such freshness.
 - Her admiring thoughts of Him are greatly enlarged and along with that her joy in Him.
3. I have some very good news for you—for all of you who are recipients of His redeeming grace—for all who are trusting in Christ for salvation.
- a. You are destined to have the same response that Mary has...
 - You are destined to magnify the Lord and to rejoice in Him forever and to do it more and more!
 - It is a wonderful thing!
 - If you are under His grace and not under law,
 - It is in your future to see more and more of His glory and to delight in all that He is—in Him as the one who loves you so well!
 - What a future!
 - b. Do you see how it works?
 - God has purposed that you should be in the flow of His redemptive grace.
 - That grace that appeared in history to Adam and to Noah and to Abraham and to Moses with all Israel and to the exiles and to Mary and then to those who saw Him crucified and raised again.
 - If you are trusting in Jesus Christ, you are in the flow of this redemptive grace through which God keeps on blessing you...
 - And that grace and blessing is going to keep on flowing to you forever...
 - And as it does, you will more and more see the glory of your God and rejoice in His goodness!
 - You will forever stand in the torrent of His blessing.

- c. Don't you love that little phrase in 2 Thessalonians 1:10 that speaks of what we will do when our LORD comes for us at the end of the age?
 - It says, "when He comes in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe."
 - How we will admire Him in that day!
 - How enlarged our thoughts of Him will be!
 - How our joy in Him will be increased!
 - That is your destiny if you have stepped into the river of His grace through faith in Jesus!
 - And I say, if you are not in the river of His redemptive grace, why not?
 - There is nothing but a very wicked heart that keeps you from coming to Him once you learn of Him through the gospel!
 - What possible reason would you have to refuse to come to Him to be made right with God?
 - Certainly not a good one!
 - God has sent Him to save His people from their sins!
 - Nothing but a hatred of God and a love for wickedness is keeping you from coming to Him to be saved.
 - Really, I mean that—you hate God if you won't come to Jesus.
 - He is there to restore you to God and you refuse Him.
 - That is true hatred.
 - You don't believe because you do not want to be reconciled to your God!
 - If you truly did want to be reconciled to Him, you would magnify the LORD and rejoice in God your Saviour as soon as you learned of Him!
 - You would see that here is the salvation that you so desperately need!
 - And that God in His grace has provided it and that He has called you to come and receive it...
 - And you would come to Him and you would magnify Him in your soul and rejoice in Him in your spirit.

TRANS> But let's move on.

- Let's go on in this great passage to:

II. See some specific ways that your thoughts of the LORD and your joy in Him will be enlarged if you are in the way of His grace.

A. First, that you will have an ever-increasing sense of His mercy

1. We recognise God's mercy best when we come to see how undeserving we are that He should even take notice of us.
 - Mary considers this in verses 48-50. She says:
 - Luke 1:48-50: For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth 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 on those who fear Him From generation to generation.
 - Just think what Mary has been told!
 - The most High God who is holy and who dwells in inaccessible light has come to her—a lowly maiden—and told her that she will bring forth His Son from her own womb!
 - She was but a simple maiden—and the mighty Lord has bestowed this amazing privilege on her!
 - Truly all generations will call her blessed!
 - It is quite a thing to have a great personage—a king or something—take notice of you and reach out to help you!
 - It is a display of great mercy because you have nothing to offer back to the great one...
 - And it is even more marvellous when you are one who in fact deserves the opposite...
 - When you have sought to overthrow the king and are consigned to punishment by Him—
 - and then He has pity on you and shows mercy to you!
2. How far Mary's words reach when we apply them to the church as a whole!
 - a. It is a stupendous thing that the holy God who inhabits eternity has come to His lowly—
 - and not just lowly, but rebellious creatures—
 - to be born of them and to live among them and to give His life a ransom for them!
 - b. Because of our pride, we miss the greatness of this mercy.
 - 1) We have such high thoughts of ourselves that we do not see the great difference between us and God.
 - It does not shock us the way it ought to shock us that He should come to be born of us and to live among us and to give His life a ransom.

- At this point it is very unlikely that Mary yet grasped the fact that He would not only be born among us,
 - but that He would give His life to redeem us.
 - But even without this knowledge that was to be revealed, it was still amazing to her that God should regard her!
 - The grace of God had touched her personally.
- 2) But God’s mercy was very shortly to be *all the more* revealed in the cross.
- We have seen grace revealed that Mary had not yet seen!
 - She had seen great grace in the Son of God coming to the lowly...
 - But now we have seen that He gave Himself to be cursed in the place of guilty sinners!
 - Mary magnified the LORD for such mercy as that He should be born to her, an unworthy, lowly maiden.
 - How much more ought we to magnify His mercy and rejoice in Him to know that He came to bear the curse for us!
 - We see our lowliness all the more because we see that the Son of God had to take this great step for us...
 - And that He did take it!
 - We were so unworthy—so lowly—that such measures were needed to redeem us!
 - And those measures were taken because He is so merciful!
- c. And I tell you that there is still more for us to grasp of this mercy!
- 1) He is going to come in His glory and take us to live in His house in constant communion with Him,
- On that day, we will say, “How could it ever be that I should be brought here!”
 - “What am I doing here in the courts of my God as His own bride?”
 - We will see His glory and His majesty like we have never seen it before, and when we do,
 - we will comprehend His mercy as we have never comprehended it before!
 - Imagine, the church will be presented as His bride!
- 2) Truly His mercy is upon those that fear Him from generation to generation!
- How great is that mercy!

- How our sense of it is enlarged as God's grace comes to us in our lowly condition.

TRANS> That is the first way that our thoughts of Him and our rejoicing in Him is enlarged as His grace flows to us.

B. Secondly, you will have a greater and greater admiration of His power.

1. As His grace comes to us, delivering us from bondage to sin, death, the world under Satan, Satan himself—all of these things—we see His power in ways not see before.
 - a. I am reminded of Israel in Egypt and how the LORD told Moses that He was going to harden Pharaoh's heart in order to make His power known.
 - And that is just what the LORD did.
 - He hardened Pharaoh's heart so that Pharaoh would use all of his might and power to resist God.
 - And being so feeble in their knowledge of God before His power had been revealed,
 - the people doubted if the LORD would be able to deliver them from the mighty hand of Pharaoh...
 - And even after He had worked mighty signs and wonders in Egypt to deliver them,
 - They again doubted if the LORD would be able to deliver the nations of Canaan into their hands.
 - But the LORD showed His power again and again in redemptive history.
 - He did it at Egypt and at Canaan and when He brought His people out of exile in Babylon.
 - b. Mary remembered all this great history and now she has been told that the One who was promised to come and crush the head of the serpent would be born to her!
 - She considers what power will be displayed through Him!
 - The final blow will be delivered to Satan and to all who continue in the rebellion that he began in the earth.
 - In verses 51-53, she speaks of this great power:
 - Luke 1:51-53: He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty.

TRANS> It is very important to understand her words here.

2. The might she is speaking about that is to be destroyed is that of the proud.
 - a. David was a mighty man and he had mighty men all around him, but God was not opposed to David.
 - And Solomon was very rich as was Job, and God was not opposed to either of them.
 - Riches and honour come from the Lord.
 - It is not that God despises those who are rich and important.
 - b. She is talking about those who are in league with Satan in his rebellion.
 - Many of them, like Pharaoh, and like the men at Babel are mighty and rich...
 - They feel that they are invincible.
 - They feel that even God cannot overthrow them.
 - They have carved out their own way and their own prosperity, in their minds, without God.
 - The truth is that even the breath that is in their nostrils is from God, but they do not acknowledge Him.
 - They are living in the first lie of Satan that in casting off the Lord, they can be like God.
 - These are the mighty ones and the rich ones that are going to be overthrown...
 - those who are so elevated in their pride that they suppose they have their riches and their power from themselves.
 - They do not give thanks to the LORD or call on His name.
 - And for this reason, they are highly offensive to Him!
 - c. Mary recognises that in this fallen world,
 - the LORD often raises up these proud and rebellious ones while keeping His own people in a condition of weakness and lowliness.
 - But she is sure of the promise that through the Messiah who is to be born of her,
 - the rebellious will be brought down...
 - Things will be turned around.
 - It will not be the Pharaohs who will inherit the earth, but the meek who have come to the LORD for His promised grace.
 - God's power will be displayed in crushing the serpent's head!
3. How God's power was displayed for His people even when Jesus came the first time!

- a. First, in that Satan was completely unable to draw Him into the rebellion.
 - He employed all his tricks and all his enticements.
 - He struck Him in His time of greatest weakness as He faced the cross.
 - But for all his craft he was unable to draw Him in.
 - Jesus overcame Him, being obedient even to the death of the cross.
 - b. And then again, we see the great power that was displayed when the curse for our sins that He bore had sunk Him into the grave...
 - And He emerged from the grave with everlasting victory over death for all His people.
 - What power!
 - c. And now we are told that the very same power that raised Him from the dead is at work in us, to give us new life!
 - Our gracious Lord is transforming us by His power.
 - And as His grace works all around the world to turn the nations from their rebellion to the living God,
 - we see that power displayed before our very eyes.
4. And now we wait for the final display of His power...
- We wait for that last day when the LORD Jesus will come to put a final end to His enemies.
 - He will cast Satan and all who are still in league with Him into the Lake of Fire where they will be kept forever and ever, away from the joyful presence of the Lord.
 - He will destroy them by the very breath of His mouth!
 - Such power as has only been seen in part will be fully revealed.
 - How we will marvel! How we will rejoice!
 - Hallelujahs will go up from His people before His throne!
 - They will cry out, saying,
 - Rev. 19:6: "Alleluia, for the LORD God omnipotent reigns!"
 - And His great power will also be displayed in raising up all who have betaken themselves to Christ.
 - They will be raised up with glorious immortality!
 - His power will be displayed in reversing the curse so that there will be a new heavens and a new earth.
 - He will fill the hungry with good things, but the rich will be sent away empty...
 - What power will be displayed.

- You who belong to Christ, who are in the way of grace!
- It is yours to see the display of this power as the torrent of His grace flows to us.

TRANS> That is the second thing that Mary mentions here.

C. Third, see that you will have an ever growing recognition of His faithfulness.

1. You can see in verses 54-55 that Mary speaks of God's covenant mercy.
 - She says:
 - Luke 1:54-55: "He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of *His* mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever."
 - As we saw before, it was to Abraham and his seed according to the flesh that the promises of God first came.
 - When Mary speaks of the LORD remembering His mercy, there is no doubt that she speaks of *hesed*—
 - As in English, the Greek New Testament does not have a distinctive word for this covenant mercy,
 - but *hesed* is the word of the Old Testament that speaks of God's covenant love that is promised.
 - the promise that He would bless His people by giving them a Son who would redeem them from the fall.
 - The context makes it clear that this is what Mary has in mind because she speaks of the mercy that was spoken to the fathers,
 - to Abraham and his seed.
2. When God first made that promise, His people had no idea what it would require of the LORD to keep it!
 - a. But all through the years, His faithfulness is displayed despite the unfaithfulness of His people.
 - When the people came out of Egypt and set up the golden calf,
 - the LORD threatened to destroy them and raise up a new nation,
 - but Moses reminded Him of His promise of grace and in faithfulness to His covenant, He did not destroy them!
 - Of David He said,
 - Psalm 89:28-37: My mercy I will keep for him forever, And My covenant shall stand firm with him. His seed also I will make to endure forever, And his throne as the days of heaven. "If his sons forsake My law And do not walk in My judgments, If they break My statutes And do not keep My commandments, Then I will punish their transgression with the rod, And their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly

take from him, Nor allow My faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me; It shall be established forever like the moon, Even like the faithful witness in the sky."

- The Lord would never go back on what the Lord had promised.
- Even in the time of Elijah when it seems that all Israel was serving Baal, the LORD declared to Elijah, saying:
 - 1 Kings 19:18: Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.
 - It was His faithfulness—He had reserved these ones.
 - And so again to Isaiah when He told him that few would receive his ministry, He said,
 - Isa 1:9: Unless the LORD of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah.
 - that is, like Sodom in that they would have been completely destroyed.
 - But again, it was His work to leave to them a remnant.
- b. But still, the people had no idea what would be required of the LORD for Him to keep His promise to bless them, sinners that they were, and to redeem them from sin.
 - We had no idea until Jesus went to the cross and it was declared to us that there could be no blessing for us apart from this!
 - To what lengths our LORD went that He might be faithful to His promise!
- 3. And you, all of you who hear my words...
 - You can be absolutely certain that He will remember His promised mercy to you if you will but come to His Son to obtain His salvation!
 - You will not always be faithful to Him,
 - but He will never leave you or forsake you if you have turned from the way of pride to be redeemed by His mercy and power in Christ.
 - You will see the power of His grace at work, even as Mary did,
 - both in His people corporately, and in you individually.
 - You will be able to declare, as Mary does, that He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy.
 - But I must warn you!

- You will know nothing—absolutely nothing—of this grace if you refuse to come to the Saviour that God has sent.
 - There is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.
 - In faithfulness to His promise, God has sent Him to show mercy to Israel and to all the families of the earth,
 - to all those who will come to Him that they might be made righteous and live in God’s house forever.
 - This is not something you want to miss!
 - Pity those who do not find this salvation!
- But you who have found it...
 - It is your destiny to magnify the LORD and to rejoice in God your Saviour with Mary and with the whole church of God.
 - That is your certain future.
 - More and more you will see His mercy, power and faithfulness.
 - How you will magnify Him!
 - How you will rejoice before Him!
 - What a future!
 - What a blessed future!