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Mary, Mother of our Lord
Luke 1:46-55
August 15, 2021
Prepared for: Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Greenville SC

- Today, we mark the feast day for St. Mary, the young woman who gave birth to the Incarnate Lord. Before we can really talk about Mary, though, we need to talk about Zechariah. The two stories are irrevocably intertwined.
 - Zechariah was a priest, “righteous before God, and living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord.”
 - Despite all this righteousness, though, his wife was “barren” and they had no children.
 - They’re also “getting on in years.” They’re old!
 - Zechariah is chosen (purely by chance!) to be the priest on duty in the temple one day. While he was in there alone, he suddenly finds himself in the presence of an angel.
 - Recognizing Zechariah’s terrified response, the angel opens with, “Don’t be afraid!” and then goes on to tell Zechariah that he and Elizabeth are going to have a child.
 - Not just any child, mind you, this child will be the one who announce the Messiah to the world.
 - Zechariah’s response? (paraphrased) “What are you, nuts? I’m an old man! My wife’s an old woman! This can’t be true!”
 - And the angel replies by making Zechariah mute until he comes to faith after seeing the promise unfold.
- Why does Zechariah’s story matter when today is supposed to be all about St. Mary, Mother of our Lord?
 - Because I am not St. Mary! You are not St. Mary!
 - And the story of St. Mary is too often told as a “Look how God rewards obedience” story, which it is not!
- The gospel lesson for today is the Magnificat. It is St. Mary’s response to the Angel telling her she would bear God’s own child.
 - It is a song of submission and obedience.
 - It is also a song about how God will do unexpected things!
 - It is a song about God’s economy.
 - ***And there is no indication that God rewards submission or punishes those who struggle!***

- Zechariah vs. Mary
 - Zechariah questions whether or not God's promise to him will really come true.
 - God makes Zechariah mute until his child is born and he sees the promise fulfilled.
 - *Until the promise is fulfilled*
 - This is important!!
 - Zechariah doesn't remain mute. Once Zechariah comes to understanding, he speaks again.
 - St. Mary acquiesces easily to God's promise and sings a song of praise.
 - God's promise to her is also fulfilled.

- The Magnificat
 - God's promise is not just for the submissive and obedient.
 - God's favor is not just for the submissive and obedient.
 - God's blessing is not just for the submissive and obedient.
 - Insert sigh of relief!
 - God blesses those who have faith generation after generation.
 - God humbles the proud and brings down the powerful.
 - God lifts up those at the bottom of society.
 - God feeds the hungry.

- We're in church. It's a safe place to confess our sin.
 - We are all Zechariah, questioning God's wisdom, power, and ability.
 - If you say otherwise, I'll call you a liar! I've been here long enough to hear enough of your struggles to say this with confidence.
 - We are also all St. Mary, confidently submitting to God's call in our lives.
 - Same as before. I've seen your faithful witness to God's love for our world!
 - Most days, we're somewhere in between the two. We are, as the Lutheran Confessions teach: *simul justus et peccator*, simultaneously saint and sinner.
 - And always, always, we are God's beloved. Even when we're struggling, even when we feel like God has sent us a trial because we've asked questions, God's love, God's mercy, God's grace is the final Word.

- Mary did give birth to the Savior. Jesus did die. And Jesus was raised. Amen.