Sermon Brief, Important Cross References and Quotes, Helpful Links, Discussion Questions, Fill in the Blank Listening Aid, "How Well was I Listening Questions"
June 27 2021
Luke 1:39-45: "Looking to Jesus"

Sermon Brief:

1. We are looking at Luke because we want to see Jesus.
2. And so far we've been in Luke 1:1-38 where Luke introduces Jesus where He's making it very clear what God's doing through Jesus is huge. He does that by telling two stories. In the first story in verses 5-25, he sets what God is doing through Jesus in its Old Testament context. Jesus is the fulfillment of thousands of years of history. In the second story, verses 26-38, the angel proves in spite of where Jesus is born and who Jesus is born to and all the worldly kind of objections people might bring up, that He really is going to be able to do all the Old Testament promised He would.
3. It's big, what God is doing through Jesus.
4. And I've been praying you would get a sense of just how big it is. We sometimes shrink the gospel into something very small, as if it were all about now and all about us, and we're trying to fight that tendency as we look at Luke by just staring at Jesus.
5. And yet while Luke is heavy on the vertical, who Jesus is and what God's doing through Jesus, he does also want us to think about the horizontal, how we live in this world. The gospel does have implications. If this is who Jesus is, and if this is what God's doing through Jesus, what difference does that make?
6. The good news is that Luke's answer to that question is not super complicated. He makes the answer pretty obvious. But, that answer is sometimes challenging for us, because it is revolutionary.
7. And to show you how revolutionary, I want us to look at Mary in verses 39-45, because it's pretty clear Luke wants us to.
8. He's highlighting Mary as someone who is significant in several different ways. One, how much he talks about her. Two, the way he talks about her. And then three, the surprise of this story itself, forces you to ask questions. Specifically, what is it that makes Mary significant?
9. That is an important question. Here is someone who has been shown great grace by God. Here is someone who plays an important role in God's great plan. Here's someone being held up to us as an example. What is it that makes her so significant?
10. The way Luke answers that question about Mary, shows us how revolutionary the gospel really is. Looking at Mary, we see three ways the gospel revolutionizes the way we think about life.
11. **First, clearly what is important to the world is not nearly as important to God.** If you look at the text, the way Luke describes Mary, the most significant thing about Mary from a worldly perspective is that she is completely insignificant. And actually, this becomes a theme in Luke. God choosing to show His grace and mercy to the people you would least expect. It occurs so often in fact, you have to ask, what is the point? The point is the gospel is all about God and His mercy and about the salvation He is providing through Jesus for those who don't deserve it. To understand the way God's working, you have to understand God's not impressed by what impresses the world. Look at Mary. She's not the one you would pick, and yet she's the one God

chose. And yet, you know what's sad? Even with all the work Luke does to make clear it's not about Mary, people still read this story and somehow make it about Mary, because this is how we roll as humans. We want it to be about something special in us. One of the very first things you need to learn about the way God's working through Jesus is that what matters to the world doesn't really matter that much to God. What matters is not you and your significance. What matters is Jesus.

12. **<u>Second, the most important thing about Mary is not Mary. It's Jesus.</u>** Elizabeth says that Mary is blessed above other women in verse 42 and then she explains why. She was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus. And what's so significant about Jesus? Luke's told us already a lot about Jesus. Here he adds another layer. Not only is He the fulfillment of the Old Testament, the great Davidic king, uniquely born to a virgin, He is God. Elizabeth calls Him Lord. Jesus is not just another great leader coming into this world. He's not just another teacher or something like that. This is God becoming man to provide a complete and total salvation. And that has implications, right? For our lives, and the way we think about what it means to be a Christian. You start understanding Jesus and the salvation God is providing through Jesus and it starts changing the way you think about life. How? Here's where we can start learning from Mary's example.
13. **<u>Third, Mary is able to enjoy what God's doing because she believes He'll keep His promises.</u>**
14. Do you?
15. We spend so much of our lives worried about stuff that's not important to God. We've got to do this and become this and matter like this. And God's like, you know what, none of that is all that impressive to me. And sometimes we are like that because we feel like so much is on us, we need to be the hero, like, we need to be our own Savior, but ultimately the gospel tells us God is sending Jesus to be the hero. He is the One who is accomplishing a complete and total salvation and so what should be the priority for us? **It should be to believe that Jesus is who God says he is and that God's going to do what He said He's going to do through Jesus.**
16. What does God want from you? He wants you to believe Him. We get that right, everything falls into place. We don't get that right, it doesn't matter what we do. It's impossible to please God without believing God. That's one reason Luke brings Mary up as someone significant. Obviously, it's not because she in and of herself was important, and not really even because of something she did. It's because of her relationship with Jesus. But you know, once you strip away all the wrong ways people talk about Mary, she still really is an example, but she's not an example because of the ways she is unlike us, but instead because of the ways she is like us and yet chooses to trust God. Do you trust God? There's hardly any more important question you can ask yourself, because at the end of the day, that's what matters.

Important Cross References and Quotes:

1. Luke 1:52,53; 4:18; 6:20; 24:10-11
2. Luke 11:27,28
3. Luke 1:25 (1:6,9,11,16,32,46)
4. Luke 1:46-56 and Luke 1:67-80
5. Hebrews 10:38
6. Hebrews 11:6

Helpful Links:

1. A Prayer for Trusting God with the Impossible
2. Luke Lecture
3. One Big Step to Growing Your Faith
4. Luke's Lesson on Grace and Faith
5. 5 Signs Waiting Has Weakened Your Faith
6. Charles Spurgeon Sermon on the Necessity of Growing Faith

Discussion Questions:

1. What has encouraged you so far from Luke's description of Jesus?
2. What are some reasons it is so important to focus your attention on Jesus? What makes it difficult for you to do that?
3. Can you think of any approaches to the Bible and a relationship with God that might keep you from seeing the beauty of Jesus? Describe potential dangers you might face in that regard.
4. Even though Luke spends a lot of time talking about what God's doing through Jesus, he also wants to help you understand the difference that should make on your life. In fact, one way he helps us think about the implications of the gospel is by telling this story about Mary. In what ways does Luke highlight the importance of Mary?
5. Mary is someone who has been shown great grace from God. But there really is nothing significant about her in terms of her social status or background. If you think about Luke's description of Jesus' ministry, you will see this becomes kind of a theme. Jesus goes after the least likely and the least likely are the ones who become examples for us to follow. What are some other examples of this that you find throughout the gospel of Luke? What does that tell you about how God works?
6. The world has a very different approach. The world makes a big deal out of social status, position, privilege. What are some ways you have been tempted to allow the world's approach to shape your life and thinking instead of God's? (E.g. choice of university, career) Do you think there would be anything different about your life if things like social status had no influence on your thinking and choices?
7. This passage makes it very clear that Mary's significance isn't because of Mary. But at the same time Luke does say she is blessed above every other woman. What is the reason for that though? Compare and contrast what Elizabeth says about Mary with what Jesus says in Luke 11:27,28. Are these contradictions? How do you resolve the tension there?
8. Mary is someone who has been shown great grace by God because she is playing a unique role in his salvation plan in that she is the mother of Jesus and Jesus will change the entire world. So, this is about God and what God's doing through Jesus. But, Luke does want us to learn something from Mary. In what way should we follow Mary's example? What does Mary teach us about how God wants us to respond to what He is doing through Jesus?
9. If I say to you, I want to give you a very important application from the Word of God, believe! You might think that is obvious and be expecting something a little more. But,

why is the call to believe God's promises actually such an important charge to us? What does Hebrews 11:6 say about the importance of faith?

10. If trusting God is this important to God, how are you doing? What are some ways you are making growing in your trust in God a priority? How can you work on growing your faith?

Fill in the Blank Listening Aid:

I. Introduction

A. In Luke 1:_____, Luke makes it clear that what God is doing through Jesus is epic.

1. In the first story about _____ and Elizabeth, he sets what God is doing through Jesus in its Old Testament context. To appreciate Jesus, you have to understand that He is the fulfillment of thousands of years of Old Testament history.

2. Then in the second story of the angel's _____ to Mary, the angel proves Jesus is going to be able to do everything the Old Testament said He would.

B. It is big what God's doing through Jesus and I've been hoping you've been getting a sense of just how big, because sometimes we shrink Christianity into something small, and try to make it all about us. We want to be the hero, and as we study Luke, we are trying to fight that tendency and just stop and _____ at Jesus.

C. And yet while Luke is primarily focused on God and what God's doing in this world through Jesus, he also wants to help us think about what that means for how we _____ in this world.

1. If this is who Jesus is, what _____ does that make?

D. The good news is that Luke's answer to that question is not complicated. But the reality is that it is revolutionary, and to show you how revolutionary, I want us to look at _____ in verses 39-45. Because it's pretty clear Luke wants us to. He highlights Mary as someone pretty significant in a number of different ways.

1. There's how _____ he talks about her.

2. Then there's the way he _____ her.

3. And if all that wasn't enough, this story is so _____, that i forces us to ask some questions.

II. What is it that makes Mary _____?

A. If you look at the way Luke describes Mary, it's obvious that what is _____ to the world is not what is _____ to God.

1. If you look at Mary from a worldly standpoint and ask Luke, what is it that makes her significant? The most significant thing he points out about her is her _____.

2. God is not impressed by what _____ the world. Look at Mary. She's not the one you would pick, and yet she's the one God chose.

B. Mary is not the most _____ thing about Mary. The reason Mary is important is not Mary, it's _____

1. The reason Mary is blessed above other women is because she was _____ by God to be the _____ of Jesus.

2. And what's so significant about Jesus?

a) He's the _____ of the Old Testament.

b) He's the _____ of David.

c) He's going to _____ this world _____.

d) Elizabeth says Jesus is _____.

e) God comes into this world to do what? To provide _____. What kind of salvation? We are talking a _____ and _____ salvation.

3. You start understanding Jesus and the salvation God is providing through Jesus and it starts changing how you think about life. You are not the Savior, Jesus is. He's the One providing the salvation the Bible talks about. And you know what you need to do? You need to _____ it.

C. This is what Luke wants us to learn from Mary. What does Mary do that produces such blessing for her? She is able to enjoy what God is doing through Jesus because she _____ God is going to do what He said He would.

1. "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a _____ of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

III. Conclusion

A. That is such an awesome warning and challenge to us.

1. What does God want from you? He wants you to _____ Him. Do you believe Him?

2. It's _____ to please God without believing God's _____.

B. It's not enough to just be religious. You couldn't get more religious than _____ and yet deep down he had a problem believing. God doesn't want you just to be a good Christian on the outside, going through all the motions. He wants you to believe He is going to keep His promises through Jesus.

C. And you know where that starts, from a human perspective. It starts with _____.

1. Mary faced a lot of challenges, but she believes, she's confident God's going to keep His promises, and you wonder how? Luke gives us a hint in the way Mary speaks, because you know what she says? She says, "Behold I am the _____ of the Lord."

2. That is Mary saying God, you are _____ and I am not. That's humility.

3. The reason many of us struggle believing God is because we think we are _____. So if you want to grow in your faith, stop, repent of that, humble yourself.

D. And go back to God's Word. This is why Luke's writing his gospel, to help believers grow in their faith and certainty that God is able to keep His promises. God in His Word is revealing how He's accomplishing salvation, and so we need to go back to His Word, looking for God and for what He's doing through Jesus, humbly crying out to God that He would help us believe.

1. What distinguishes a Christian, is not first what we do, but what we believe, that we believe that God has done and will do what He has promised in the gospel.

E. That's why Luke brings Mary up. Mary is an example not because of ways she is _____ us, but because of ways she is like us, and yet chooses to trust God. Do you _____ God?

How Well Was I Listening Questions

That's not a great name for this section. But, I thought you could use these questions for your children. I also realized that it might be helpful for you and not just for your children. So, here are some questions you should be able to answer after listening to the message. (If you are using this with your children, please recognize that obviously not all these questions will be suitable for every age. You might have to come up with your own that will more fit their

level of understanding. I tried to include a little of both. But if you can answer these questions, then you definitely will be able to do that as well.)

1. What chapter in Luke did we look at today? Can you remember what verses?
2. What did you like about the sermon? What was hard for you to understand? Is there anything that stood out to you?
3. As Christians, we believe that out of all the people who have ever lived and out of all the things that have ever happened, this Jewish man two thousand years ago, named Jesus is the most important. Why do we believe that?
4. Luke's told a couple stories so far to help prove the significance of Jesus. What were we supposed to learn from the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth about Jesus? What were we supposed to learn from the angel's announcement about Jesus?
5. So what God's doing through Jesus is really big. A lot of times we like to think and talk about ourselves, even when we read the Bible. What's the danger in doing that?
6. One of the reasons we are looking at Luke is so we can get our eyes off of ourselves and onto Jesus, but Luke does also want us to think about our lives and the difference the gospel makes on the way we live our lives. One way he does that is by telling a story about what person? What was her name?
7. What are some of the ways Luke makes it clear she is an important person for us to consider?
8. So Luke says she is really important, what is it that makes her important? That's the question we were thinking about today. And the first thing we said as we looked at Mary is that it's obvious what is important to the world is not what makes a person important to God. What is it about Mary that causes us to say that? Was she a person the world would have said was important? Why or why not?
9. Why is it so important for you to understand that God's not impressed by what impresses the world?
10. If God didn't pick Mary because she was so important, why does Elizabeth say she was blessed above every other woman?
11. What does the baby in Elizabeth's womb do when Mary greets Elizabeth? Why does he do that? And what does Elizabeth say about Jesus?
12. How do we know Jesus is human? What in this passage indicates that Jesus also is God?
13. Jesus is God becoming man to provide salvation. What does salvation mean? What kind of salvation is Jesus providing?
14. If Jesus is the One providing the salvation the Bible is talking about, what are we supposed to do? What does God want from us? What does Elizabeth say about Mary in this passage that shows us that?
15. In what way is Zechariah a warning for us?
16. What can we learn from Mary's example about where growing in faith starts?
17. If believing God's promises is the primary way Luke wants you to respond to his gospel, and is so important, what are some things you can do to grow in your faith?