

You can be certain

Small group questions

Luke 1:39-56 Certain... that God's eternal promises were being fulfilled

1. The image of Mary can vary quite a lot from the original! What motivates those who have 'added' on to the Bible's version of Mary? What motivates those who have 'taken away' from the Bible's version of Mary? What is the result in each case?

The words of the Spirit Read Luke 1:39-45

2. How did Elizabeth know what was happening to Mary?
3. What was the story with Elizabeth's baby leaping? (See Malachi 4:2)
4. How would Elizabeth's exclamation have impacted Mary?
5. By extrapolation, what is the assurance for *us* who believe the Lord will fulfil his promises to us?

The song of Mary - a song about God's mercy Read Luke 1: 46-56

6. Read again from the sermon, how Mark explained or described 'mercy'.

God's mercy to Mary

7. Mary was very aware of God's mercy to her and that she was only in this favoured and blessed position because the "Mighty One has done great things for me". In what ways are you aware of God's mercy to *you*? What ought to be our response to remembering God's great mercy to us?

God's mercy to those who fear him

8. What is this 'fear'? (Refer to the sermon)
9. Discuss this line from Mark's message:
Stand in awe of God and acknowledge your need of his mercy and you will receive _____ .
Stand before God and declare that you don't need his mercy and you will receive _____ .
10. v53 - who are the hungry God feeds (see also Matt 5:6, John 6:35)? How does God send the rich away - empty?
11. Someone tells you how they've made it in the world, and they assume that both you and God will be impressed. How do you begin to reply?

God's mercy to Abraham and his descendants

12. v54 - what were the promises to Abraham and his descendants that Jesus' coming fulfils?

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1. Where would you be if God had not been merciful to you?
 2. How would you be placed if you had to earn your way to God and plead your own case?
 3. Why are we tempted to look for significance in our worldly achievements?
 4. How can we ensure we remain humble and hungry?

Please pray that we'll remember our dependence on God's mercy and seek to praise God as did Mary! Pray that the Lord would confront us with our tendency toward self-sufficiency; that he would humble us and give us a nagging hunger for him!