

The title for today's message is: **Do You Hear What I Hear?**

Elizabeth said to Mary: ***“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”***

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen

During the Christmas season we hear all kinds of joyful carols and hymns. Some we know well, and some, not so well.

And we hear these carols, and hymns so often that it's hard to pick out a favorite one, right?

They're all beautiful, especially the older ones, and they certainly speak the message of our loving Savior, Jesus Christ.

Today, on our last Sunday in Advent, we realize that in just a couple more days we will celebrate the birth of our loving Savior, Jesus Christ.

There's one Christmas carol we hear very often, and actually its one of my favorites, its titled “Do You Hear What I Hear?”

The first verse says, Do you see what I see, the second verse says, Do you hear what I hear, and the third verse says.

Do you know what I know? And finally, the last verse says; Then listen to what the Lord has to say.

And that's exactly what our Lord invites us to do today, and everyday. He invites us to listen to what He has to say.

So we need to ask ourselves, and not only during the Christmas season, but all year long, Do we hear what He says, and believe?

When we look at our text, we see that Mary, and Elizabeth both heard what God said, and they believed.

Zechariah, Elizabeth's husband also heard, were told in verse 11 that an angel appeared to him, and said his wife Elizabeth, would have a child.

This was great news, because Zechariah, and Elizabeth were elderly, and Elizabeth was way beyond the normal age, for child bearing.

Never-the-less, Elizabeth would indeed bear a child, a son, just as God said. Truly a miracle performed by God.

And even more amazing, was that Mary too would have a child, also a Son. But at first this wasn't great news, because Mary wasn't married.

Because Mary was a God fearing woman, the kind of woman who just wouldn't allow herself to become pregnant out of wedlock.

Yet, Mary, heard the voice of God, and understood what He said to her, accepting her condition through loving faith.

And you could imagine, the news, that both her and her cousin Elizabeth were going to have babies, must have excite both of them.

And they both knew very well, that this could only happen by the grace of God.

They knew only God could make something like this happen. The angel told Mary when she first questioned it; ***For nothing is impossible with God.***"

Amazingly, Mary was much more excited about the news that her cousin Elizabeth, was already 6 months along.

That she couldn't wait to congratulate her cousin Elizabeth on her good fortune, so Mary immediately left to be with Elizabeth.

Well, Elizabeth was certainly surprised that Mary knew of her pregnancy, because she hadn't shared the news with anyone.

Elizabeth didn't want people to look at her, and make fun of her, thinking she was nuts, because she was so old.

What happened next according to our text, certainly convinced Mary that what she heard from the angel, was indeed true.

Luke said; ***When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.***

Do you know, what this means? This means that Elizabeth's baby, who wasn't even born yet, recognized the presents of the Messiah.

Note how John describes Elizabeth's baby's reaction. He said the baby leaped for joy, this is certainly different from a baby simply kicking.

This leap for joy, was defiantly something very special, very exciting, and again, very powerful.

And right after the baby leaps for joy, Luke tells us that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth says something very telling to Mary, she said: ***Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!***

She went on to say to Mary: ***But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?***

Wow, how awesome both women must have felt, especially Mary. Here she would give birth to the savior of the world, the promised Messiah.

But, at the time, Elizabeth didn't know, what part her son, who would be named John, would play in the life of the Messiah.

The only thing she knew in advance about her son John, was what the angel told her husband Zechariah.

The angel told Zechariah; ***“Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord.***

God sent His angel to speak to Zechariah, to tell him that his wife Elizabeth would have a son. And it was so.

And, God sent the same angel to Mary, to tell her that she would have a son, a very special Son. And it too came to pass.

Elizabeth and Mary realized, it was only by the Grace of God that they would both have son's who would be blessings to the whole world.

Elizabeth and Mary were both able to be awe-struck, and filled with great joy, because they knew what they heard, was indeed from God.

Now, I wonder what it would take, for people to be awe-struck like Mary and Elizabeth in our day and age?

It seems that its harder for people today, to be amazed about what God has done, or, for that matter, excited about anything spiritual.

We live in an age of technology and advancement, yet we can't see the daily miracles that take place around us, every day.

Do you hear what I hear? Do you hear the word of God, speaking loudly in your hearts?

We have joy, because of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The same Savior who God promised, to all mankind.

Yes, the savior that was born on Christmas day, He lived, died, was buried, and then rose from the grave.

He ascended into heaven to be with His Father. And soon, He will come back for all His children.

My friends, we've walked on the moon, walked under the oceans, extended life, and cured diseases. Yet we think nothing of it.

Because we believe that, we, mankind, did all those things on our own, believing that God had nothing to do with it.

So what do you think? If an angel spoke to you today, would you even listen? Would you even recognize that it is the voice of God?

Do you hear what I hear? Do we hear the voice of God anymore? Maybe not.

God spoke through the prophet Hosea saying: ***When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me.***

Isn't this what's happening in the world today? We look at our life, and we say, Look at all I have done!

Even when we look at all the work we still have to do, we just can't bring ourselves to ask God for help.

And even when we do ask, we still say we did it, that we've done a great thing. So, what happens when we believe this way?

Nothing that we have done on our own will last. Without God's help, everything will simple fall apart, only the things of God, will last forever.

It's God that feeds us, it's God who clothes us, and it's God who provides us with everything we need. Not ourselves.

Yet, like the prophet Hosea said, when we're well fed and satisfied, we do get proud ,and forget all about God.

Do you hear what I hear? Do you hear that it is God who does all these things for us?

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians: ***And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.***

God said to Noah, in the 9th chapter of Geneses; ***Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.***

Look, only by the grace of God are we given everything we need to survive, money, food, drink, cloths and places to lye our heads. Everything we need.

God gives us everything, Such as His grace. He gives His grace, so that instead of us sitting back and resting on our laurels.

We can believe in Him and know, that because He loves us so much that there's nothing more we need than Him.

This is important, because when Jesus was born, not everyone recognized Him, and many people today, don't recognizes Him either.

It took John the Baptist to prepare the way, to make sure that all knew, that this man, named Jesus, was indeed the Messiah.

And it took an angel, to bring the miracle message to Elizabeth and Mary, that they were giving birth to two holy son's. One to make way for the other.

Yes, this Infant who was born in a manger, is our Lamb of God, our perfect sacrifice, who takes away the sins of the world.

My friends, let us not under-estimate the power of listening. As Paul reminds us in the book of Romans:

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

So, Do you see what I see, what I hear, what I know. Then listen to what God has to say.

May you all have a blessed Christmas, and a spirit filled new year.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ , and the Love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.