

Good News —of— Great Joy

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 2 December 10, 2023
“Joy for the Lowly”



OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we pray that you would help us find joy this Christmas season. And help us to humble ourselves before you knowing that you will lift us up. Help us, O Lord, to think less often about ourselves and more often about other people. Help us, Lord, that we may be generous and willing to share. And in that way you may use us to lift up the lowly and you might use them to help us find life. Thank you, O Lord. It's in your holy name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Luke 1:26-28, 38 (NIV)

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:46-53 (NIV)

Mary's Song

⁴⁶And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God
my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will
call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done
great things for me—
holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who

fear him,

from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has performed mighty deeds
with his arm;

he has scattered those who are
proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵²He has brought down rulers from
their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good
things

but has sent the rich away empty.

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 2 December 10, 2023
“Joy for the Lowly”

INTRODUCTION

God chose a teenage peasant girl from an insignificant tiny village to be the mother of the Messiah. He sends the Angel Gabriel to tell her the news and Mary is very confused. But at the end of their conversation, Mary says “I am the Lord’s servant, may your word to me be fulfilled.” Mary goes to visit her relative Elizabeth and after Elizabeth supports and encourages Mary, Mary sings her Magnificat. So what do we learn from Mary about the source of joy?

God chooses the poor and powerless. But he also chooses and uses those who humble themselves before God and those who are generous. And somehow, those who humble themselves and are generous and those who are poor and powerless meet each other’s needs and together we find joy. This is what we learn from Mary’s story and her Magnificat.

QUESTIONS

1. Sheryl Sandberg, former COO of Meta Platforms, wrote this in a Facebook post this during the “Me Too” movement:
*“Like almost every woman - and some men - I know, I have experienced sexual harassment in the form of unwanted sexual advances in the course of doing my job. A hand on my leg under the table at a meeting. Married men – all decades older than I – offering ‘career advice’ and then suggesting that they could share it with me alone late at night.”**
She noted that in each instance the harasser had more power than she did.
Discuss.
2. Why do you think God choose a teenage peasant girl from an insignificant village to be the mother of the Messiah?
3. Read Mary’s response to the Angel in Luke 1:38 (on page 1). What does it take for you to respond to God’s call as Mary did?
4. Read Luke 1:46-53 (on page 1). How willing are you to use your God-given ability to lift the burdens borne by people who have fewer of life’s good things than you have?
5. During the message, Pastor Eric said, “we find joy through humility and living a life of generosity.” Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.

FINAL APPLICATION

How can you share your resources this holiday season with someone in need? How can this group help?

* Sheryl Sandberg. (2017, December 3). *The 1992 presidential race was once summed up in a pointed phrase* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/sheryl/posts/10159569315265177>