



3: NOBODY GETS ME!

Many of you know that my wife Sarah and I have been going through a season where we're "in over our heads"!

Many of you also know we've got 1 & ½ year old, 7 year old, and 10 year old daughters.

Our 1 & ½ year old is the neediest kid we've had yet! 😊 She yells at her Mom in fits of separation anxiety all of the time, and sometimes we literally think she must want to go back into the womb because she's often just mad at Sarah for being in her presence and existing! This kid doesn't only have "separation anxiety", but she has "relation anxiety" in proximity to her Mama- no matter what is going on! No joke! Dang that causes stress for Sarah, and it spills into the family too!

Our 7 year old goes to second grade at Summit Christian School which is a fifteen minute drive north from our house. We drive her there in the mornings and she takes the bus home. We carpool with another family. They drive her and their kid on Mondays and Fridays, and we drive them Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Our 10 year old goes to fifth grade at Miller South Visual and Performing Arts School which is an eight minute drive south from our house. We participate in a carpool where

we drive to and from Miller South for my 10 year old and 2 of her friends with another family. We do the driving Monday morning & afternoon, Wednesday afternoon, and Friday morning and afternoon. Another family does the driving Tuesday morning & afternoon, Wednesday morning, and Thursday morning and afternoon.

We have a Beabull dog named "Rubble" that requires regular walks, and being let out. He's on a few arthritis medications- he takes one kind in the morning and another kind at night in his food. He will only eat a scoop of his dry food when we pair it up with a slice of "Fresh Pet" Wet food chopped into smaller sections (we call it "dog bologna" y'all it's nasty but he loves it!).

We've got a cat named Daisy who needs her kitty litter box scooped regularly. She pukes often enough to have earned the nickname "pukey", and likes to puke at inopportune times in inopportune places (For example: on the fringes of a rug right when you're already running 5 minutes late to leave the house!)

We've got a house that was built in 1929. It has water leakage issues in the basement. We've had squirrels make their way into our attic, and some of the siding is coming off. Multiple things need repairs inside. I'm not good with that kind of stuff, and neither is Sarah, and we're too busy to youtube it and don't currently have the money to hire somebody to do it!

I work a full time job as an urban pastor in the Kenmore neighborhood of Akron. I get paid enough to pay our bills. Between the many meetings and situations my schedule is sporadic and different every week, though I always make it a point to take Fridays and Saturdays to be with family.

My wife works a number of different jobs part time and sporadically- She consistently works part time regularly as an ice skating coach. She works sporadically as a host for events done by a group called fusion, as an in game events host for the Cleveland Guardians baseball team, as an online host for local TV shows like Akron Buzz and 330 to Go, and occasionally acting for local commercials. Often her jobs can lead her to needing to work during the entire time that I'm off of work- which can mean, at times, that I'm with my kids solo for the duration of Fridays and Saturdays that I have off. Most of the time, she just works Saturday mornings consistently as an ice skating coach.

We pastor a small urban Church of about 100 people in an under-resourced, under-served, under-reached area of Akron, Ohio. We have a congregation of people where about 75% of the people show up sporadically, and don't serve regularly. A good amount of the population we serve can't give financially to the Church.

We are currently becoming an autonomous congregation, and were previously under the umbrella of a megachurch in the area- one that supported us financially and logistically, but one that we have, for the seven years we've existed, had a lot of differences with missiologically, orthopraxy-wise, context-wise, and on some secondary theological matters. We're in the thick of the transition into autonomy and there are many discussions happening- how will we stay financially stable as a Church? Should we merge with another congregation? Should we be under the umbrella of another more financially stable Church? Should we start a for-profit business like a coffee shop to resource our mission and vision? Who should we hire? Who can we afford to hire?

There are a lot of things spinning around me and my family right now. It's often overwhelming.

I've excluded all the things I love about my life thus far for a reason- like:

- All the amazing moments I have with my wife, and our wonderful 21 year long friendship and 19 year long marriage,
- All the incredible, meaningful, quality beautiful moments I have with my three daughters,
- All the great things about our dog and cat! They're some dang nice animals to have around and anybody who has visited us would agree!,
- How much we love our house, our neighborhood, and our neighbors where we dwell in the West Side of Akron,
- The things my wife and I love about our jobs, and
- All the meaningful ministry things we get to be a part of in our Church, as well as the greater body of Christ. How grateful we are for the megachurch that planted us giving the support they've given us, and the wonderful circle of friends and supporters surrounding us in our local congregation...

But I've intentionally excluded these things not just to complain, but to emphasize the fact that many things about our life are very difficult and complex right now! Can some of you relate? Are you juggling things right now that are tough to juggle? Do you feel like you can't handle it all? Do you feel overwhelmed? We very often do!

And with all that chaos, more than ever I need people to just be myself around! I need people to walk with me in the good the bad and the ugly! I can't tell you how grateful I am, especially as a pastor, for the friends in my life and in our community that allow me to be human and flawed! These people also will call me on it when I'm out of line and not put up with my nonsense, but they'll also support me when I'm frustrated, let me

vent, and let me be imperfect, all while pointing me to Christ and His love! Dang y'all- that's what real discipleship should be about!

We need people who “get” us!

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, “got” each other. Heck man, they both had just experienced miraculous impregnations! Mary's was obviously more so. But they supported one another!

As we dig into Luke 1:39 and the section following, we see that Mary was visiting Elizabeth to assist her in the final months of her pregnancy. Given the immense social pressures and stigma that Mary was about to endure as an unwed mother, she likely sought solace in Elizabeth, who would believe the divine nature of her conception.¹ Mary sought out Elizabeth because Elizabeth “got” her!

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped inside her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² Then she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and your child will be blessed! ⁴³ How could this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For you see, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy inside me. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill what he has spoken to her!” (Luke 1:39-45)

Elizabeth and Zechariah lived in a town in the hill country, which probably referred to the hilly region surrounding Jerusalem.² In fact, “Juttah”, an ancient priestly town, was likely the exact town. Its held by the Greek Church to be the birthplace of St. John the Baptist, and as such it is the goal of pilgrimage to thousands of Greek Christians each year.³

We've gotta understand the journey that Mary was on and the rich Israelite heritage that viscerally put itself on display in front of her during her travels. It was doubtless the same general path to which she had been accustomed, from her ordinary journeys to the Holy City, at the solemn annual feasts. But just now her mind was in a strange new frame of feeling. Each familiar locality, so crowded with history and devout remembrances of her nation's annals, would, under these present circumstances, make

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 1:39–45). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

² Martin, J. A. (1985). [Luke](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 206). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³ Exell, J. S. (n.d.). [The Biblical Illustrator: St. Luke](#) (Vol. I, p. 58). London: James Nisbet & Co.

on her imagination a far deeper impression than usual. We must remember this, for it gives help in the interpretation of her song starting in v.46!

Out from under the shadows of western hills, she would come into full view of the whole country, quite across to Mount Carmel, on the desolate ridge of which Elijah defied and conquered the priests of Baal. Megiddo, where Josiah lay dying; Jezreel, where Ahab sinned; the brook Kishon, beside which Deborah sang, after Sisera was slain—these were close at her feet. Before long she would arrive at Shechem, and seem to hear the old burden of cursing and blessing echoing from Ebal and Gerizim. Perhaps she paused a moment beside Joseph's grave; perhaps she sat to rest, and quenched her thirst at Jacob's well. A little further down she would reach Jerusalem, "beautiful on the sides of the north," and catch glimpses of the golden-roofed temple shining in the sun. Diminutive Bethlehem next would have to be passed, and her tired feet would tread the lonely path that goes by Rachel's tomb. Her eyes would roam over the verdured fields where David tended his father's flocks, and caught the starry figures of the eighth and the nineteenth psalms. And while she lingered on such a spot, she would think of Ruth returning with Naomi after bidding Orpah farewell. Hard hills are those which now she would have to climb, before she could reach the cave of Machpelah, or discover the small houses of Hebron in the distance. Of this we have no detail. But it aids us much afterward to keep it in mind; for it shows how she went thinking all the way to her destination.⁴

Mary, pregnant with both the soon to be Messiah, and with the rich heritage of the Old Testament absolutely enveloping her in all directions during her trek to Juttah, also made her way into the arms of a dear friend. Someone who really "got her"!

She entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Not only did Elizabeth "get" her. Apparently, lil John the Baptist in fetal form also "got" the Messianic fetus being formed in Mary's womb, and **the baby John in Elizabeth's womb leaped** at the sound of Mary's voice because Mary was pregnant with Jesus!⁵

Now can I be real for a second and just say that I don't get why during a worship and prayer session, people could possibly look all upset, mad and depressed??? How in the world could we, while gathered together in the presence of Jesus Christ our Savior, be all downcast and solemn? Look y'all- even lil John the Baptist, before he came outta the womb, couldn't help but **leap** with joy in the presence of little fetal Jesus Christ! He worshipped with joy in His presence y'all! How in the world could we be all dismal in the presence of Christ?

⁴ Exell, J. S. (n.d.). *The Biblical Illustrator: St. Luke* (Vol. I, p. 58). London: James Nisbet & Co.

⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:41). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Maybe lil John already had the atmosphere of Psalm 66 coursing through his beautiful little veins... I can't help but think that he did! This psalm just screams this kind of joyful, reckless abandonment in praise to our God and King! Check it out!

*1 Let the whole earth shout joyfully to God!
2 Sing about the glory of his name;
make his praise glorious.
3 Say to God, "How awe-inspiring are your works!
Your enemies will cringe before you
because of your great strength.
4 The whole earth will worship you
and sing praise to you.
They will sing praise to your name." (Psalm 66:1-4)*

Praise God with joy! Lift Him up in glory! Make praise of Him glorious! Don't be hanging in a worship gathering scrolling through your insta! Put that phone down and praise Him! There is no one like Him!

After lil John prophetically paved the way for his mama to praise, *Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you (Mary) among women, and your child will be blessed! How could this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For you see, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy inside me. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill what he has spoken to her!"*

Elizabeth acknowledged that Mary was blessed because she had the privilege of giving birth to the Messiah, the savior of the world!!⁶ Right in tune with lil baby John in her womb, She was filled up on the Holy Spirit of God and echoed the joyful praise of Psalm 66:1-4 right along with him! She didn't hold back! She didn't try to be all pious! She got unfiltered in the presence of Jesus, His Father God in Heaven, and His earth Mama Miss Mary!

Get unfiltered in the presence of Jesus, please! Jesus doesn't need more religious folks all worried about how they might be perceived! He's calling us to be wildly passionate followers of Him! That doesn't mean we all need to be crazy expressive- but let His love burn in your heart! Allow His love to burn in your heart!

⁶ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 1:42). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Elizabeth even prophetically calls the unborn Jesus her “Lord”, recognizing Him as Messiah and perhaps also as Yahweh!⁷ In Luke the term “Lord” (*kyrios*) often described Jesus. It had a double meaning. “Lord” would’ve been more important for a Greek reader than would the term “Christ” (meaning “Messiah”), for the Gentiles had not been anxiously awaiting the Messiah. On the other hand the Septuagint often used the word “Lord” (*kyrios*) to translate Yahweh.⁸

How did John and Elizabeth have this heavenly knowledge? Did Mary fill them in first? That’s not what the text says. And by the way- Mary hadn’t been texting with Elizabeth leading up to this moment because this was 2,000 years ago alright? Elizabeth didn’t get any kind of memo here. It says that ***when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped inside her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit!*** This was a supernatural encounter and a true prophetic moment! Elizabeth got into the presence of Christ in the womb of Mary and started uttering the things of heaven! Oh may the mystery of the Trinity and the god-man Jesus Christ just utterly blow us away! Praise the Lord!

When we get into the presence of Jesus Christ, the things of heaven get stronger than the things of earth! Heaven takes over! Addictions get broken! Joy comes! Relationships get healed! People have visions! People have breakthrough! People get physically healed! People get emotionally healed! People get psychologically healed! People get mentally healed! People get spiritually healed! Generational curses get broken! Trauma gets dealt with! Heaven invades earth y’all! My friend once said that “Jesus shows up where He’s wanted”! That’s the truth!! We want our community to be filled with hungry disciples of Jesus that are intensely seeking Him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength! And **HE WILL SHOW UP!** And when He shows up, good stuff is gonna happen! Lost folks are gonna get found! Broken folks are gonna taste wholeness! Lives are gonna be changed!

I love it that Elizabeth also exclaimed “Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill what he has spoken to her!” In contrast to Zechariah, Mary believed Gabriel’s words.⁹ I love that Mary, a woman, and one that would’ve been marginalized in her context and era, and maybe still so in many contexts today, demonstrated more faith than Zechariah, who would’ve been a highly sought after man of God in the priestly class! That speaks volumes and preaches alone!

⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 1:43). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁸ Martin, J. A. (1985). [Luke](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 206). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 1:45). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

But God don't care what gender, socio-economic class, race, background, or pedigree you are. He cares about your heart! He delights to reveal His heart **in fullness** to anyone willing to receive Him!

And then Mary, right in line with lil John and Liz, busts out into praise.

Luke 1:46–56 Known as the Magnificat, Mary's song, marked the first of four hymns in Luke's birth narratives. It was styled after Hannah's song of praise in 1 Sam 2:1–10.¹⁰

The magnificat screams the fact that not only did Elizabeth **get** Mary, but **God** got Mary!

And some of you need that word today! You feel lonely and alone. You feel like nobody "gets" you! Stay faithful! God's got you! God **gets** you! God hears you! God listens to your cries! He hears your prayers as you pour your heart out to Him! He loves you more wildly than you could ever fathom or possibly know!!!!

The song Mary sang, consisted almost entirely of Old Testament allusions and quotations. The same was actually also true of the songs of Zechariah and Simeon (vv. 1:68–79; 2:29–32).¹¹ Important to note, her song, as expected, would lack a gospel flavor for it offered representative Jewish description of the work of God in punishing evildoers and rewarding the righteous.¹²

It's kind of wild to think about the fact that while Mary was singing this song, the Savior being formed in her womb would one day blow her away with the grace of God, and **complete** her relationship with God! The Savior would live out and show her that God calls us to love our enemies, and delights in flipping a wicked, evil life around and redeeming it for eternity!

Let's dig into Mary's beautiful hymn of praise:

MARY'S PRAISE

⁴⁶ *And Mary said:*

*My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ because he has looked with favor*

¹⁰ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:46–56). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹¹ Martin, J. A. (1985). [Luke](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 206). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹² Schreiner, T. R. (1995). [Luke](#). In *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* (Vol. 3, pp. 806–807). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

*on the humble condition of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations
will call me blessed,
49 because the Mighty One
has done great things for me,
and his name is holy. (Luke 1:46-29)*

Mary's introduction reflects Hannah's in 1 Sam 2:1. She was "magnifying the Lord".¹³ She was linking up with the Messiah being formed in her belly who would one day teach His disciples to start their prayers by magnifying God. "Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name!" (Matt. 6:9)

And we ought to begin every prayer by exalting the holiness and goodness of God! He is worthy of it all! And when we do this, it puts the rest of the prayer into perspective! We wouldn't start a letter or an email without addressing the audience. God is our audience of One who gives ear to our prayers, and He is good!

Mary's spirit rejoiced in God her savior, because He had looked with favor on the humble condition of His servant. She highlighted her modest condition in a similar fashion to Hannah in 1 Sam 2:8 (compare 1 Sam 1:11). Again, the theme of God's care for the lowly was highlighted throughout Luke's Gospel.¹⁴ **From then on, all generations would call her blessed.**

In her time, Mary would've been marginalized and outcast. People would've falsely called her a whore for the outward appearance of being pregnant before marriage. They wouldn't have even begun to understand or fathom her being miraculously impregnated by God! She would've brought disgrace on her husband (we'll get to all that later in the text of Luke!) She was poor, and wasn't by any means some sort of religious celebrity.

But **millenia** of generations would celebrate her and recognize her beyond her life on earth!

Sometimes our recognition ain't gonna come in this life, but beyond our lives! Oh if we would actually think about the impact that we're going to have on generations after us instead of the shallow, short-lived, flash in the pan impact that we're going to have in our eighty years (give or take) on this planet!

¹³ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:46). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁴ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:48). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

If we understood that maybe we'd focus on our significant others, our kids, our friends, our neighbors, and our communities a little more, and on our images, our social media clicks, our popularity, our dollars, and the power we can accumulate and exert over others less! We'd certainly **flex** less and **bless** more!

Mary pointed all her praise to “**the Mighty One**”, like Hannah, Mary praised God's attributes by using names that reflected His character (compare 1 Sam 2:2).¹⁵

She continued to praise God and His upside down Kingdom;

*⁵⁰ His mercy is from generation to generation
on those who fear him.*

*⁵¹ He has done a mighty deed with his arm;
he has scattered the proud
because of the thoughts of their hearts;*

*⁵² he has toppled the mighty from their thrones
and exalted the lowly.*

*⁵³ He has satisfied the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty. (Luke 1:50-53)*

Just like addiction, anger, rage, lust, adultery, verbal abuse, physical abuse, greed, gluttony, and poverty get passed down from “generation to generation”, God's mercy can counteract it all and get passed down from generation to generation on those who are known and loved by Him leading them to healthfully, reverently fear Him!

God's mercy is more powerful than any generational curse! If you've felt enslaved to the mistakes of your parents and grandparents the Lord wants to dig down to the root of your pain and issues, and He will heal and deliver you! He can break any chain!

God isn't only a chain breaker and generational sin destroyer, but He's with the humble! **“He has scattered the proud because of the thoughts of their hearts”** Both Mary and Hannah renounced the arrogance of the proud who made themselves enemies of God (see 1 Sam 2:3; compare Prov 3:34; Isa 2:12; 13:11).¹⁶

¹⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:49). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁶ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:51). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

He has toppled the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly Both Mary's and Hannah's songs described a reversal of fortunes: The lowly were exalted, while the exalted (or haughty) were brought low (see 1 Sam 2:4, 7–8; compare Job 5:11).¹⁷

God had satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. This expressed God's gracious provision for the lowly (compare Psa 107:9). In 1 Sam 2:5, a similar phrase expressed Hannah's newfound joy associated with the birth of Samuel.¹⁸

*The key terms in this section of Mary's song were "lowly" and "hungry". They were terms that could refer simply to the pious people in Israel but more probably a reference to economic poverty and political oppression was included.*¹⁹

Now God doesn't somehow hate all people with money and love all people who are poor. I know evil people with no money and evil people with lots of money (and I can think of some ex-presidents that fit that description! 😏) I know godly people with lots of money and godly people who are broke.

One thing is for sure, 1 Tim. 6:6b-10 says it all.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. 8 If we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. 9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

No matter how lower, middle or upper class we are, we better be aware that the love of money is as addictive as heroin. To quote the prophet Ice Cube, We better check ourselves before we wreck ourselves.

But here's the other thing... Where there is a desperation, a lack of resources, and a poverty of material things, often, there can be a beautiful poverty of spirit that follows... The babe in Mary's belly would one day encapsulate this in a talk delivered on a certain mount...

¹⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:52). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁸ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:53). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁹ Marshall, I. H. (1994). [Luke](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 983). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

*3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
4 Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
5 Blessed are the humble,
for they will inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God. (Matt. 5:3-8)*

I could be a pastor in a well to do, upwardly mobile, suburban or rural area, where the median income is twice the size of the neighborhood I minister in. To give you some context, The Median household income in Kenmore, Ohio is \$40,631, the median household income in Medina, Ohio is \$72,688. Now I'm not trying to dog my friend Alan Bowdler who planted a Church in Medina- he's a godly dude who loves Jesus and people well- but where do you think planting a Church and pastoring a Church is going to be more financially lucrative? Kenmore or Medina?

And let me ask another question that's maybe far more pertinent. It's one that far too many American Christians don't want to ask... Where do you think planting a Church, pastoring a Church, and being a disciple on mission is more **spiritually** lucrative? Kenmore or Medina? Both have people who need Jesus. Both are equally valuable places to do ministry and be the body of Christ. One could say that both have equal needs.

But I know the call on my life to minister in tougher places, and when I mediate on Mary's Magnificat, I'm reminded of why I am where I'm at! And those of you who do ministry in tougher contexts- Mary's song is a word of encouragement for you! Stick it out! God is with you in it!

Mary went on about the God of her people, saying;

*⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy
⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he spoke to our ancestors. (Luke 1:54-55)*

In fulfillment of Yahweh's proclamation to Abraham, Mary's son was to be a channel of blessing and salvation to the nation of Israel (Gen 12:1–3; 17:1–27).²⁰ This was to be the Son of God, the Messiah, who would say in that same message on that same mount where He lifted up the lowly;

17 "Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the law until all things are accomplished. (Matt. 5:17-18)

Jesus would be everything that the heavens, the earth, and genuine humanity had longed for!

The song ends, and the passage closes by informing us:

⁵⁶ And Mary stayed with (Elizabeth) about three months; then she returned to her home. (Luke 1:56)

She stayed until roughly the time of John's birth (compare Luke 1:26, 36).²¹

We need others to **get** us, especially when we're going through something wild and intense! We're meant to hold each other up! Elizabeth **got** Mary. Mary **got** Elizabeth. John **got** Jesus, even in the womb! Mary also **got** God, but even more so, God **got** Mary!

And **God gets you**. You may not realize it yet. "The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) When you finally understand that God **gets you** and wants to lead you, then, through the power of Christ, you can finally **get God!**

²⁰ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:55). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 1:56). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.