



Dear Friend,

*“At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth.” (Luke 1:39-40)*

The visit between Mary and Elizabeth, one young and unwed, the other advanced in aged, both poor and pregnant, is a familiar scene during the Christmas season. These women have been the subject of mystery and intrigue over the centuries as scholars have examined this visitation, the significance and ultimate meaning within the narrative of the first Christmas.

While we can speculate the overall point is clear: Mary went to give encouragement and support, rather than waiting to receive it from someone else. It is within this scene, amidst the anxiety, confusion and mystery of life that we encounter a friendship, within the topsy-turvy plan of God. A friendship that leads into one of the most profound and prophetic words in Scripture, a song that invites us to consider that while we may not be able to make sense of our own circumstance, God has a future planned and a purpose in store for His children. Mary proclaims, *“the Lord..has been mindful of the humble estate of his servant,”* and the rest of her song proclaims that God in the mystery of His providence is working out His plan. This friendship and prophetic song presents us with an opportunity to consider what God has done in the past, while encouraging others in the uncertainty of today about what God has promised to do in the future.

It is important to keep this friendship and Mary’s song in mind as we spend Christmas with friends and family, although differently than how we had hoped and planned. Our hope and prayer is that the eyes of our family and nation will be opened to see that the child to whom the angel Gabriel declared would be named *“Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins”* is the Lord and has come to seek and to save the lost. While much has changed over this past year, that truth is unchanged.

As we come to the end of another year, I am sincerely thankful to you for your friendship, encouragement and partnership with the People’s Mission. Things are better when we work together. Together we are making an impact. God’s Word proclaimed will accomplish God’s purposes.

In the warmth of Gospel fellowship,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel".