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Mary and Elizabeth ...good news and bad news.

based on Luke 1:39-56

by Ralph Milton

from [Is This Your Idea of a Good Time, God?](#)

Wood Lake Publishing

This drama, including a sung version of the Magnificat paraphrase below, can be seen on the [StoryFest](#) series on You Tube.

"...the God who sang that song through you."

Mary's feet hurt. She'd forgotten how far it was from Nazareth to the hilltop home of her cousin Elizabeth.

Mary had started out early that morning, trying hard to hide her morning sickness. A desperate and fearful child she was – all of 14 years old, making up stories and excuses so she could go to visit her cousin.

Why Elizabeth? Mary wasn't sure.

Except that Mary knew Elizabeth had always loved her even when she had felt less than lovable. And now, when Mary was in terrible trouble, she hoped – she knew Elizabeth would love her still.

Except that Elizabeth was married to a priest, and Mary knew well that priests were sworn to enforce the very law that would surely have her executed. Death by stoning was the punishment for girls who got pregnant before marriage.

Now Elizabeth's house was just up the hill. And there was Elizabeth, big as life and pregnant.

"Elizabeth!" Mary called, joy and fear mingling in her voice.

"Mary!"

The two women ran toward each other, embraced and cried and laughed.

"Let me look at you, Mary," said Elizabeth, cupping her cousin's face in her hands. With her wise old eyes, Elizabeth looked deep into the young and tragic eyes of her cousin and saw the pain there.

"Mary, what's wrong?"

The dam burst. The flood of tears, held back by courage and by fear, burst and spilled into the arms of the older woman, who held the young one close until the flood had passed.

"I'm pregnant, Elizabeth," Mary whispered.

"Oh God help us," said Elizabeth, not as a curse but a prayer. "God help us!"

"It's so hard to explain..." Mary began.

"Then don't explain, Mary," Elizabeth said, touching Mary gently on the lips. "Just know that regardless of what may have happened, I love you and God loves you. Now let's just sit down here, in the shade, and talk.

And talk they did. Until the sun had set and they pulled their cloaks around themselves against the cold, they talked as only women who know pain and joy know how to talk.

"Mary," said Elizabeth, "I could feel my baby kicking inside me when I heard you call. That baby was glad to see you Mary. Glad to see you, and the baby you are carrying. Mary, a child to come is God's promise of hope."

"I know that, Elizabeth. There is one part of me that is full of joy, and strong, and hopeful. There's another part of me that is angry and terrified and cowardly. Sometimes I feel as if I'm two people."

"Mary, do you remember an old song I used to sing for you – the one that was sung so many years ago by Hannah, one of our foremothers, when she waited those long years for a baby? During all the long, long years I waited for God to send me a baby, that song helped me feel strength and patience, even when I was afraid and angry."

Quietly, then with more and more strength, Mary began to sing the old, old song.

All that I am
grows and expands,
and rejoices with God
who will save me.
Small as I am,
I grow and expand,
to the future and God
who has blessed me.
God's love offers life,
God's strength is the love
that brings justice and peace
to all nations.
God's love offers life,
To the poor and the meek
Who are raised from the ground
where they suffer.
All that I am
grows and expands,
with God who brings life,
hope and justice."

Elizabeth looked at the slip of a girl called Mary. So thin, so weak, so vulnerable. And yet, deep in those dark, youthful eyes, Elizabeth saw great strength, courage and faith.

"I don't know how, Mary, because I know all the laws and all the customs of our people are lined up to destroy you. But somehow I believe God is with you. The child in my womb, the child in yours, are God's gifts of hope, Mary.

"Can you believe that, Mary? Even when everything seems to be painful and wrong, can you believe in the God who sang that song through you?"

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