

Luke 1:46-56

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[0 : 00] Good morning to you. It's good to be in God's house. It's good to be in God's house in the morning. I'm sure it's sitting there. Amen. It's good to be with you.

I don't think that I saw anyone on this morning standing around angry saying, Get out of my seat because I normally sit here when you're not here. It's good to be here with you today.

Today, we've heard this text read. We've heard this text sung on today. And what a great preaching text it is.

Mary's Magnificat. So-called because of that's how the text begins in the Latin version of the New Testament.

But before we look at this Greek song, and it is a song, I want to have a few comments concerning the setting in the text.

[1 : 03] And then talk about the song. But then wrap up my thoughts this morning talking about the season. Let me pray.

And then we'll get into God's Word this morning. Lord, we love you and we give thanks to you for this wonderful season. It celebrates the entry of your Son to the world.

Thank you, Lord, that He has worked in our hearts. He has lavished us. You have lavished us with your grace and mercy. We rejoice in Him today.

We thank you for this combined worship. We pray that you would continue to be glorified as we hear God's Word together. And as we fellowship together following the worship today.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. If you will look at the text. Matter of fact, the context, the setting. We follow Mary, who has come from Galilee, Nazareth in Galilee, down to Judea.

[2 : 21] And she enters into Zacharias' and Elizabeth's home. Though her stay, according to verse 55 of our text, lasted only three months, the gospel writer, just shares this initial encounter, her entry into their home.

And I find it very interesting on this morning that what we see in this text, in ways, parallels what we're doing here this morning.

There was an intersection, an intergenerational intersection in the home of Zacharias on that day.

An older generation was meeting with a younger generation. Elizabeth, old enough to be Mary's mother, and Mary meeting together.

As a church, United Church, celebrated 150 years on last year. Our church is not even, you know, I mean, we're 13 years old.

[3 : 39] You're 10 times, organizationally speaking, our age. Today's text includes these two women of two different generations.

We're reminded, according to chapter 1, verse 7, that Elizabeth and Zacharias are, they are advanced in years. Mary's a teenager.

The younger woman enters into the home of the older one. What happened? If you were to pass by Zacharias' house on that day, peek into the window, you may have seen a spectacle of sorts.

A woman, more than likely old enough to have her AARP card, visibly pregnant, greeted by a teenager.

And all of a sudden, you see the odor of the two women grabbing the lower part of her valley. And she is greeted by this teenager.

[4 : 53] Not only would you have seen this sister-to-sister greeting, you would have heard a spirit-filled Elizabeth with elevated voice.

Speaking about the honor of the specialness of Mary, as well as the child that she was carrying. Verse 42.

Blessed are you among women. The blessing is the fruit of your womb. Now, can you imagine that kind of sight?

But what had happened? The barrenness of the older woman, Elizabeth, had given way to the blessedness of pregnancy. Now, but more specifically, in the text, the God of heaven had visited his people both with might and mercy.

How many of you didn't wonder of what their spirit is?

[6 : 06] The virgin had conceived and was with child. And the God of heaven had done all of this. Who had done all of this. He was the theme of Mary's song on that day.

And her object of worship. Oh, is God through in and through the sun the theme of your song?

Is he the object of your worship? Oh, we have been here in the presence of God and one another this morning. And we have heard songs that help us to lift our sights to him.

We have heard scripture that reminds us of his promises of old. And we're examining a song this morning that my prayer would help us to elevate our desires and our affections toward the God who works mightily and mercifully.

Even in our day and in our world today. This God is the theme of Mary's song. What about her song? We see it, don't we, in verses 46 through 55.

[7 : 21] It is a scripture-based song. If you were to look at this, you can trace back in the Old Testament. And you can hear and see the psalms.

And you can hear the echoes of the promises of God. It's patterned after Hannah's song in 1 Samuel chapter 2. It's a psalm that would fit well into the hymn book of Israel.

The book of the Bible that we know as the psalms. It's a psalm that considers the might and mercy of God. And it considers it from several vantage points.

Mary's personal perspective is considered in verses 46 through 49. A broad historical perspective is considered in verses 50 through 53.

And then in the last verses, verses 54 and 55. A national perspective comes in view. Mary's personal perspective.

[8 : 27] A broad historical perspective. And then a national perspective that comes in view. Mary's song considers the Lord's work in her life personally.

Notice the personal pronouns. How it's punctuated there in verses 46 through 49. My soul magnifies the Lord.

And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all nations will call me blessed.

Yes, the Lord's work considers, the psalm considers the Lord's work in Mary's life personally. Oh, and isn't that the way a psalm should emerge?

At least in part. While he considers God's work in it broadly. Oh, but we can hear the psalmist say in Psalm 103. Bless the Lord. What? Oh!

[9 : 29] What? My soul. In what? Oh! That's within who? Me! Bless. In his holy name, huh? Mary's personal, praise is personal.

And it's directed to the Lord God of Israel. This is Mary's soul celebration. It comes deep from within her. Her view of God and view of his might and mercy is enlarged.

And particularly in view of his most recent kindnesses to her. The text and the word magnifies the Lord. It parallels the choices in God my Savior.

In Psalm 106 verse 21 and verse 22 it speaks about the great things and the wondrous works and the awesome deeds of God. Ever experienced any of those?

Great deeds? Great things? Wondrous works? Counting up, cataloging the kindnesses of God? Just look back in 2011.

[10 : 33] Yes, for some of us it's been difficult and challenging. Oh, but if you were to check every morning, you would find out that God's mercies were fresh and new every morning.

He's the God of rescue and deliverance. Who had brought great deliverances for his people in the past. But he was also presently at work in that day, in that era, in the lives of his people.

God working for Mary. Working in her. For the glory and honor of God. Notice he speaks about God as Savior.

God the deliverer. God the one who is about the business of rescue. But not only had God looked on her with favor, God had smiled on her.

And he had crowned her with a very unique position in history. Great things for her the Lord had done. And great praise came from her on the basis of his work.

[11 : 39] Not only does the psalm consider God's work in Mary's life personally. It considers the Lord's work in the world historically. Look at verse 53 particularly.

His mercy is for those who fear him. Who reverence him. From generation to generation. And notice this. He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered the proud in the thoughts or the imaginations of the heart. He has brought down. Just look at all of these things. God had worked historically. Historically. I mean.

You can look back from that point in history. And see. I mean. If we look at that in Old Testament history. How God had brought down Pharaoh. And God had brought down Nebuchadnezzar.

And all of these. These Old Testament kind of things. But then as we see historically. Throughout human history. God has done the kinds of things. That we see in this chapter.

[12 : 37] General manifestations of God's might and mercy. And the works of the Lord here are cataloged. He has done these things.

He is sovereign. In the affairs of men and nations. And notice what we see here. The fate of the proud. The fate of the mighty.

The fate of the rich. God is so mighty. That he can. And often does reverse. The situations of men and nations here on earth. Don't we see that in our day?

As you think of the landscape of this world. Both internationally and locally. Well this has been a year. That the mighty have fallen. Just think of the nations of the Middle East.

And just think here even locally. And in our state. Where our own former governor. Received the sentence of 14. Years in prison.

[13 : 35] The mighty fall. But also God has a way. Of raising up those who are helpless. And giving them stability.

And help. Now we can look and we can see. The secondary causes. Of these things in the world. But as we look at here. Ultimately God is the one.

Who is in control. Bringing down one. Raising up another. God. Or in human history. Manifesting both his might.

And his mercy. He references here. The arrogant. The high. The mighty. Proud people. Targeted by God. For overthrowing.

He removes people. From places of power. But then those that may be considered nobodies in this world. Are raised up. By the mighty hand of God.

[14 : 35] The empty to fill. But the rich. Are sent away. Empty. The way that God works. In ways that we consider.

I mean this. He has a way of. Of turning. Things upside down. Or another way of saying it. Is right side up. Where are the realms.

Of which these things apply. Again. As we can think about. The various. Domains and spheres of life. In this world. God ultimately at work. But not only personally.

And. Historically. But also nationally. Look at verses 54 and 55. He has helped. His servant. Israel.

How. In remembrance of his mercy. As he spake to our fathers. To Abraham. The founding father. Of the nation. Of Israel. And to.

[15 : 31] His offspring. Forever. Notice. Again. The flow of the passage. All the way from verse 46. It goes from the personal. To the historical.

And then to the national. Or another way of putting it. To those that God is in covenant with. The covenantal. Huh. What the Lord was doing. At this parting point. In history.

In the text. Was in fulfillment. Of his promises. That he had made. To ancient Israel. How. In remembrance. Of his mercy. Micah chapter 7. Verse 20.

Says. You. Will show. Speaking of God. Faithfulness. To Jacob. And steadfastness. To love. To Abraham. As you have sworn. To our fathers. From the days of old.

I want you to take a look. At the text. Another text. Just over the page. Look at Luke chapter 1. Verses 67 through 75. One of our readers. And the advent candlelighters.

[16 : 24] Read a portion of this. But I really want you to see it. Because this song. Considers the Lord's work. In Israel. Nationally. In these verses.

That we look at. Look at there with me. Luke chapter 1. Verse 67. And following. And his father. Zechariah.

This is John the Baptist's father. Was filled with the Holy Spirit. And prophesied. Saying. Blessed be the Lord. God of Israel. Here it is. For he has visited.

And redeemed. His people. And he has raised. A haunt of salvation. For us. In the house. Of his servant. David. As he spoke. That by the mouth.

Of his holy prophets. From of old. That we should be saved. From our enemies. And from the hand. Of all who hate us. To show the mercy. Of promise. To our fathers. And to remember.

[17 : 18] His only covenant. The oath that he swear. Here it is. To our father Abraham. To grant us. That we being. Delivered. From the hand. Of our enemies. Might serve him.

Without fear. And holiness. And righteousness. Before him. All of our days. Time. Song. Considers. God's work. In Israel.

Nationally speaking. The song. Personal. Historical. National considerations.

Of God. Working. In his might. And mercy. In this world. What about the season? The setting. And the song. Before us.

Are great reminders. Of the joy. That is fitting. For an advent season. God joined. Question.

[18 : 13] Is a good one. For all of us. To consider. But advent. Joy. Shows up. In. Different. Kinds of ways. It's not just.

One. Simple. Variety. Of joy. Yes. Let's join. Mary. In her. Ecstatic. Personal. Praise. In view.

Of all. Of God's. Kindness. Kindness. To us. Personally. And they are. Many. The greatest. Of which. Is God. Sending his son. In a grace. Calling us. To him.

And embracing him. As Lord. And savior. Let's join Mary. In ecstatic. Personal. Praise. But our. Consideration. Of what the Lord.

Has done. Historically. Is a cause. For a different. Kind of joy. Joy. It's what I would call. Sober. Joy. It's the joy.

[19 : 08] Of realizing. That God. Is at work. In this world. Regardless. Of who. Comes to power. Or who is brought down. From power. God.

Is at work. It's the joy. Of knowing. That his might. And his mercy. Are manifested. Simultaneously. In this world. Both of them.

Can coexist. In this world. Together. It's sobering. To think. That regardless. Of perhaps. What might be. Even in your. Bank account. This morning.

And you may be. Counting on. What you would consider. To be a very. Lean. Christmas. But. Sober. Joy. I says.

Regardless. Of if my cupboards. Are filled. Or if they're empty. I can still have joy. Because of God.

[20 : 03] Of might and mercy. Is at work. In this world. And I can put my trust. In him. God. Is the joy. Of knowing. That God.

Is ultimately. In control. Some of you. This morning. May have. Ecstatic. Joy. What about. Sober.

Joy. Joy. Knowing. That regardless. Of what's in my hands. Or not. God's in control. Regardless. Of my status. Of the important. Or not. God is in control.

Regardless. Of maybe. The storm. That may be. Growing. In my family. God is in control. And I can have. A sober joy.

Knowing. But still. There's another. Kind of joy. That's just right. For this season. Not ecstatic joy. Or sober joy.

[20 : 59] But expecting joy. It is the joy. That believes. That the living God. Keeps. His. Promises.

They're rooted. So deeply. In the soil. Of scripture. And of history. And just as he was the God. Who kept his promises. Made many centuries ago.

To Abraham. On to Isaac. And Jacob. And Jacob. That he was going to send. One of his seed. Into this world. And that through his seed. All the nations.

Would be blessed. It's expected joy. So Christ. Having been once offered. To bear. The sin of many. Will appear.

A second. Time. Without sin. Unto salvation. To those who. Eagerly. Or expectantly.

[21 : 56] Look for him. Or wait for him. Do you have. Expectant. Joy. This morning. Huh. Looking to the one.

Who has brought. You into. The life. Who has given you. Yes. Extended joy. And helped you. With sober joy. But expectantly.

Looking for him. To appear. And to. Complete. What he has begun. In you. He. Who has begun. A good work. In you. Will.

Complete it. Will perform it. Till the day. Of Jesus Christ. What a song. God's might.

God's mercy. Manifested. Personally. Historically. Nationally. Or covenantally. And it's something. That you and I.

[22 : 53] Can embrace. If yes. This God. Might and mercy. Is the God. That we celebrate. Because he has. Sent his son. To the world.

Be loving. Worship him. Submit to him. Today.