

The Magnificat

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[0 : 00] Good evening, friends, and a very warm welcome to our service of worship. It's good to be with you here tonight, and as we come and seek to worship God, we pray that indeed we'll know His Spirit leading us in His truth.

Well, friends, let us worship God. Let us sing to His praise from Psalm 34, the Sing Psalms version of Psalm 34, page 40 of the Blue Psalm books, reading at the beginning of the psalm.

At all times I will bless the Lord, I'll praise Him with my voice, because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice.

Together let us praise the Lord, exalt His name with me. I sought the Lord, His answer came from fear, He set me free.

We're going to sing down to the end of the verse, Mark 10, and then to the praise of God at all times I will bless the Lord. At all times I will bless the Lord, I'll praise Him with my voice, because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice.

[1 : 26] Together let us praise the Lord, exalt His name with me.

I sought the Lord, His answer came from fear, He set me free.

They looked to Him, how shine with joy, they are not good to shame.

This suffering and life through the Lord, from Him, He set me free.

The angels of the Lord, His name with me. The angels of the Lord, his name is God, His name is God, He set me free.

[2 : 28] Here I am, Donaghan, who sets his people free. And please can see the Lord is good, who trusts him in his best.

O hear the heart who sings with me, who will not be no blessed.

Young lions, dear, O weak and faint, my hand, the far left foot.

And those who wait upon the Lord will not have any good.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let us pray. Gracious and ever-blessed God, we come and we give thanks for the words that we have sung one with another.

[3 : 50] That those who seek after the Lord will not lack any good. And so we pray that as we gather for these few short moments this evening, that indeed our heart's desire would be to seek the Lord.

That we would have that spirit of humility. That we would sit under your word, listening to what you have to say.

For to your folk, you speak peace. That we would be engaged with that desire to come and collectively praise your name.

For you are worthy. You are worthy of praise and adoration. You are King of kings and Lord of lords. You are the God who inhabits eternity.

Yet the God who condescended to come into time. Taking bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The God-man.

[5 : 01] And we thank you, O Lord, as we reflect upon the wonder of who you are. That we might, as a people, be found all the more praising you and seeking in our hearts to magnify your great name.

As we reflect upon the person and the work of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. For that great narrative of redemption that has indeed reached out to sinners just like us.

That you've not left us to ourselves. But rather you in your love and in your mercy. In your kindness to us.

Even this evening hour. You bid us to come. Come unto me, all you who labour and are heavy laden. And I will give you rest.

How we all long for that rest for our souls as we find ourselves in the restlessness of this world. A world that is continually making so many promises to us.

[6 : 14] Yet time and time again failing to deliver. But yet in you, O Lord, we give thanks that there is to be found a promise that cannot be broken.

For you are the friend that sticks closer even than a brother. And at this time of year of giving and receiving gifts. We pray, O Lord, that many more would come to receive the greatest gift of all.

The gift of your son. For what shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Time is short and eternity is long. And so help us to be mindful of the fact that today is the day of salvation.

That once again Jesus of Nazareth is passing by in the gospel. And that we would not rest even this evening hour until we can say in our hearts and in our experience.

[7 : 26] He died for me. We pray for this dear congregation. We give thanks for them. For their witness in this community.

We pray that you would continue to be with them and strengthen them and lead them as they seek to share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Your word tells us to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. And we pray, O Lord, that that indeed would be our mission day by day.

For we live in a day where we in our communities are so aware of the fact that although the doors of our churches are open, they fail to come in. And that we are called to come in.

That the seed of the gospel was there sown. That indeed your Holy Spirit would give the increase. That you would work mightily through this means whereby souls who heard something of the greatest gift of all would be touched in their hearts.

[9 : 02] That they would be led even to ask the deeper questions of life. And in doing so that they would be led by your spirit to the fountain of life himself.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Encourage your dear brethren here, we pray. Be with Donald and Emma as they seek to minister in this community.

That we know the evil one is not asleep as we seek to serve you in various ways in the front line. That he is seeking to bring us down by his fiery darts.

And so protect our dear friends here. Put a wall of fire around them. The elders and deacons and members. That they would all be united with that shared vision and desire.

To see your name high and lifted up. For you are worthy. You are worthy of all praise and adoration. We pray even for those who joined for the family service today.

[10 : 10] We give thanks and we rejoice for the fact that there were those here who would ordinarily never join together in a public act of worship such as this.

You are able, O Lord, we believe. You are able to bring the increase. And so we pray for such. Forgive us for the many times that we lack faith.

That we look upon the increase of your kingdom in our communities as being nigh on impossible. Yet you are the creator of the universe.

You are the sustainer of all things. Our times are in your hands. And you are able to do all things well. And so as those who gathered here today go home with that seed of the gospel in their hearts.

We pray that that seed would not lie dormant. But rather that it would take root. That it would grow up and bear much fruit. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[11 : 14] So that this building would be a building filled with men and women, boys and girls. Joining together with their hearts desire to come and to serve and to worship you.

And so be with us, we pray, for our short time. Be with those who cannot be here this evening but have a desire to be so. Perhaps through the infirmity of the flesh or the mind or whatever other reason.

That you would be with them and help them. Be with a family who is mourning afresh in this community. We know that the voice of death is never far away.

Reminding us all of the fragility, the brevity of life. That here we have no continuing city. And so for all of us we pray that as we reflect upon such visitations in our experience.

That we would seek to do all that we can. To seek that city which is to come. Whose builder and maker is God.

[12 : 22] We thank you then for that eternal hope that rests with your people. That the best is yet to come. That you are a God who does not leave us as it were to the hovels of our own ambition here in this world.

But rather you enable us to look forward to that great and glorious inheritance that belongs to us. Incorruptible, undefiled, that does not fade away.

And in the midst of it, our Lord and our Saviour. What a wonder it is that we will, if we are yours tonight, see you face to face and be like you.

Let that eternal hope fragrance our walk here in time. And grant unto us all the more a desire to share something of the wonder of the good news of the gospel.

As one beggar to another. Showing where to get food. And so we pray for those this evening. For whom this time of year is a struggle.

[13 : 28] You are a God who sent your son to bring peace into this world. And so we pray, O Lord, for those for whom this time of year does not bring peace.

But rather a burden. For those who are struggling perhaps with an addiction. Those who find themselves battling against financial difficulties.

Those for whom weaknesses within the family circle are only accentuated at times such as these. Be with one and all, we pray.

So that at this time, this Christmas time, those in our communities would be able to see beyond the temporal. To the spiritual, to the greatest gift of all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so be with us now in our reading, we pray. Grant us hearing ears and understanding hearts. And forgive us for all our many sins. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

[14 : 33] Well friends, we're going to read together from God's word from the gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 1. It's a fairly lengthy chapter.

We're not going to read the whole chapter together. But if we could pick up our reading from verse 39. Luke chapter 1 at verse 39.

Luke chapter 1 at verse 39. It is here the word of God. In those days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to a town in Judah.

And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.

And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she exclaimed with a loud cry. Blessed are you among women.

[15 : 40] And blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leapt for joy.

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord.

And my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour. For he has looked on the humbly state of his servant. For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed.

For he who is mighty has done great things for me. And holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humbly state.

[16 : 46] He has filled the hungry with good things. The rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home. Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth and she bore a son.

And her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her. And they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise a child.

And they would have called him Zechariah after his father. But his mother answered, No, he shall be called John. And they said to her, None of your relatives is called by this name.

And they made signs to his father inquiring what he wanted him to be called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, His name is John.

[17 : 51] And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed. And he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbours.

And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea. And all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What then will this child be?

For the hand of the Lord was with him. And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited the redeemed, his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

And you, our child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace.

And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

[19 : 49] Amen. We pray God's blessing on that reading of his own holy, inspired, and inerrant word. Well, friends, before we come back to this chapter together, we're going to sing once more, this time from Psalm 138, the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 138.

Reading at verse 4 of the Psalm, We're going to sing verses 4 to the end of the Psalm, to the praise of God, All kings upon the earth that are.

All kings upon the earth that are. All kings upon the earth that are. All kings upon the earth that are.

Shall build ye praise, O Lord. For God, O Lord.

eth Not, ready to hear, at the time you Wiris, that all kings upon the earth that are. Ch regulated with skin Bluegado 97 ■■■■ural once Please Orange Fish Oh Oh Thank you.

[22 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you. Well friends, for a short time if we could turn back to the chapter we read together, Luke chapter 1.

And we can think, consider together what we have in verses 46 to 55. Mary's song of praise, the Magnificat.

And Mary said, Well here we find ourselves, friends, on the eve of Christmas Day.

This is, of course, the time where we remember the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. A detail that is, of course, crucial to God's rescue plan for mankind.

[25 : 22] God becoming man to save man. But friends, I wonder if you or I, if we were to choose the detail of how that was to come to pass, if it were that we were to write the script, how would it look?

Surely, surely, surely, as king of kings, we would think at least that God becoming man, he would come as a strong and a valiant king.

But no, he didn't. But no, he didn't. Instead, he came as a baby, dependent on his mother.

Well, in that case, we might think, well, surely, surely, this king, yes, dependent on his mother. But nonetheless, this king will be born into a palace.

But no, he wasn't. He was born into a stable, in a feeding trough, amongst all the animals. Well, in that case, we might think, well, surely, he would surely be born to a reputable princess or a queen.

[26 : 44] But he wasn't. Instead, he was born of the teenage virgin Mary from this nondescript village in the middle of nowhere.

This is God. This is God. And it's this particular point of condescension that we're going to pause just to reflect on for a short time this evening as we here come alongside Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Now, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is one of the most misrepresented women in all of scripture, in all of time. Because, friends, as Christians, as the church, we have a habit of going to extremes.

On one hand, what we see is that Mary has been elevated to a position that is almost equal with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then, on the other hand, in response to this, what the church has done is silenced Mary. Put Mary to one side so that she's never spoken about, she's never referred to in the fear that in doing so, somehow we will be elevating her in a way that we shouldn't.

[28 : 06] Friends, we're called to be balanced. Always, as Christians, we are called to be balanced. Extremes are never, ever healthy.

And so it is with Mary. We don't push her to the sidelines because God didn't push her to the sidelines. In fact, in fact, God chose her.

He chose her to be the bearer of the son of God himself. This teenage girl from this backwashed town of Nazareth, she was to be the one to give birth to the one who would provide salvation for mankind.

But how did she feel, this Mary? What effect did it have on her, as a teenage girl, to have God, and just think about this, to have God incarnate growing inside her?

That's what happened. How did she cope? How did she respond? Well, friends, in order to answer these questions, we only have to consider what we have before us here tonight.

[29 : 19] The Magnificat. Mary's song. We have it here before us. A song which gives us tonight an insight, a window into this ordinary girl who had an extraordinary experience in her life.

Let's look at verse 30 together. And we see in verse 30 this encounter that Mary has with the angel Gabriel.

And the angel, of course, reveals to Mary how her life is about to change forever. But what we see is a word of reassurance.

Do not be afraid, he says Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great, and he will be called the son of the highest, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.

[30 : 33] Here we have that great announcement to this not-so-great girl, this ordinary everyday girl, that she, in her womb, is going to conceive the God-man.

Now, what I love about the Bible is the sheer humanity that we see here. We see the reality of what it is to be human.

Because having found out this astonishing news from the angel Gabriel, we're not going to focus on Joseph or his reaction just now. That's maybe for another time.

But what we see here is how Mary, she simply has to share the news. You know when something happens in your life, something significant.

And you're just itching to tell someone. You want to share that with someone. You want to come alongside someone who you know well in this world and share the news with them.

[31 : 31] Well, that's what Mary does. She makes her way to her cousin Elizabeth straight away, who herself is pregnant with John the Baptist, eager to share the news.

But, and this is wonderful, because as she enters Elizabeth's house to tell her, which was barely, the barely incomprehensible news, she doesn't need to.

Because as Mary enters the house, what we see in verse 41 is that the Holy Spirit begins to bear witness. When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

This whole scenario, it's saturated with the supernatural. Even upon hearing the voice of Mary speak, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit who reveals to her what has happened.

And she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

[32 : 47] And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leapt for joy.

Let's just think about what Elizabeth is here saying. And she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

That is why this, and why is this granted rather to me, that the mother of my Lord, she's saying, should come to me.

It's only the Holy Spirit that could reveal such a thing to this woman, that there before her very eyes was this young girl, and the fruit of the womb of this young girl, was the Lord himself.

Now on the surface, maybe even to you tonight, I don't know, this might seem far-fetched. And today, to many, that's exactly what it is, far-fetched.

[33 : 54] This is nothing short of mystical nonsense. But you know, friends, it's so easy for us to deny something when we've never experienced it, isn't it?

And it's so easy for us to write things off as maybe being fiction, just because we ourselves have never had that in our lives. And I think this applies especially to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, much like Mary, I would say, I feel at times we put to one side.

There's power in the Spirit. And the Holy Spirit has a very particular work to do. He doesn't draw attention to himself. That's not what he does.

But instead what he does is he takes of the things of Jesus of Christ and he reveals them to men and women. So if you're here tonight and you perhaps wouldn't identify as being a Christian, but what you see is that your eyes are being opened.

[35 : 02] The minister's getting better, as it were. The Word of God is speaking to you in a way that it didn't before. You find yourself able to pray in a way you didn't before.

It's not just routine or ritual. There's life in your prayer. That is all the working of the Holy Spirit, revealing to you the things of Christ.

And that's what's so encouraging for us preachers. We cannot save anyone. But there's power in the Word applied by the Spirit.

And that's so encouraging as you reach out in this community last week and even this morning that you might see people coming in and you might think, well, will they come back? Won't they come back?

We've tried this and it didn't work. Think about the Spirit. The power of the Spirit. And how that self-same Spirit that bears witness to Elizabeth here can work in the hearts of those in North Tolstair.

[36 : 04] Be encouraged. Be encouraged. And so this Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, I should say, reveals to Elizabeth in a peculiar way.

And what we see here is those of you who maybe have been on the road for a long time have had this. You have a special bond with one of the Lord's people. And maybe at a time in your experience, the Holy Spirit has burdened you for one of the Lord's people.

Maybe that person has come before you so that you're led to pray for that person. You don't know why. Maybe to this day you don't know why. But you did it. The Spirit bearing witness.

It's a wonderful thing and it's something we should be looking out for. It's something that we should be seeking after because we are part of a supernatural realm as children of God.

We're not bound to the physical and we praise the Lord that we're not. We're not bound to that which we can touch or see or taste or smell or hear. Our vision goes so far and beyond the physical to the spiritual and with that are the promptings and the workings of the Holy Spirit and that's of course what we all need in Tulsa and Southloos all over for revival and renewal to take place in the church.

[37 : 35] So that's just an aside about the workings of the Spirit. Blessed are you among women we read. That's what Elizabeth says. Blessed are you among women.

Now this is important. This is important when we think about the extremes of opinion when it comes to Mary when Mary's exalted to a position that she ought not to be because it doesn't say here blessed are you above women.

that's not what it says. Blessed are you among women. You are one woman amongst many women and men who are blessed.

But why is she blessed? Is she blessed because she's been chosen to carry the Son of God the fruit of her womb? Of course she is.

Undoubtedly this is a blessing. But this blessing will be only for a time. Jesus will only be with her for a period.

[38 : 42] And so while that's a blessing it's a finite blessing. This blessing is more than that friends. Because as we read in verse 45 Mary is blessed because what do we read there?

Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. She's blessed because she believes.

She's blessed because of her faith. Her faith in the word of God speaking the impossible through the angel a message that can only could ever only have been laid hold of by faith.

And that's what it is to believe. It's to lay hold of the promises of God by faith to apply them to ourselves. What might seem or appear impossible to man we believe is possible because it's not our word it's God's word.

And that what God says is true. And so she's blessed because she believes. And that's for all of us here tonight. We're blessed when we believe.

[40 : 01] Perhaps the greatest sin in the church and I'm speaking to Christians just now perhaps the greatest sin in the church at the minute we might say it's worldliness it's this it's that it's the next thing.

Is it not unbelief? Is it that we're not believing the promises? We're not laying hold of them by faith and because of that we're not blessed.

We put God in a box and because we put him in that box we don't expect him to work unless certain things come into play. Blessed are you among women and blessed is she who believed.

And this blessedness of belief it's confirmed as Mary goes on to express her faith. And how does she express her faith?

Well she expresses her faith through the song that we have before us. A song that tells us so much tells us tonight so much about Mary and her God.

[41 : 14] A song that reflects a deep mature spirituality from such a young woman. Verse 46 And Mary said My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Notice how she begins. Notice how she starts this song of praise. My soul magnifies the Lord. Why does her soul magnify the Lord?

Because she's chosen to conceive Jesus in her womb by the Holy Spirit? No. That's not why she's praising God. Her spirit rejoices in God her Saviour.

See it's all coming back to faith. Her Saviour. That's her starting point. The fact that at some point she's become aware of the fact that she is a sinner in need of a Saviour but not only that she has been saved.

My Saviour. God my Saviour. You know friends when we come to praise the Lord with his own people ought this not always to be the basis for our praise.

[42 : 34] This always ought surely to be the starting point. I say this to my congregation often. Let's daily be at the cross. Let's be at Calvary.

Let's look upon our Saviour. Let's cause that view of our salvation, of our redemption to come to that place where we cannot but magnify the Lord so that our spirit is inevitably led to rejoice in God, our Saviour.

God will be saved. Why do the things of God become strangely dim to us? Because we forget. We forget what we've been saved from and what we've been saved to.

We lose perspective. Secondaries become primaries. Primary becomes secondary. and so we lose perspective, we lose sight, we neglect to praise God for our salvation, for the fact that we are redeemed.

And I say this to myself as much as to you, but this really ought to characterize our daily prayer. Giving thanks to God for daily bread, absolutely, but giving thanks to God for Jesus.

[44 : 05] Thank you, Lord, that you saved me. Thank you that you've plucked me as a brand from the burning, that you've taken me from that fearful pit, from that mighty clay.

Thank you, Lord, for setting my feet on that rock. Thank you that I can call you my father and my friend.

And of course, for this, what do we need? We need the Holy Spirit that we spoke of before. We're never going to see the beauty of Christ as Savior unless the Spirit enlightens our hearts and our minds.

So having acknowledged the Lord as Savior, Mary then goes on to her immediate situation. She's not ignoring what's happened to her. She praises God at first, but then she comes on to say in verse 48, for he has looked in the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

[45 : 19] The fact that the Lord has chosen Mary to be the bearer of the light of the world, absolutely a cause for praise. And of course, this tells us more about God than it does about Mary, taking us back to the beginning when we thought about how we might write the script if God was going to come into the world, what we would make sure had to happen for that to take place.

But that's not how God worked, of course, because what we see even here in Mary is the fact that God has chosen to identify himself, and this is a wonderful thing about the gospel, he's chosen to identify himself with ordinary people, just like you, and just like me, in our lowly state that he chose to come alongside us.

And not only did he choose to come alongside us, friends, and this is really something worth pondering, he chose to become one of us. He didn't have to, but that's what he did.

He chose to become one of us. God becoming man, growing up in this sin-sick world, the one who had inhabited eternity, what that looks like, we don't know, we have finite minds.

The one who had been in perfect harmony with Father and Holy Spirit, here he is growing up in this world, we ourselves perhaps are grieved by what we see and what we hear.

[47 : 00] Imagine God walking the face of this earth for 33 years, there he was, becoming one of us.

What love, what accommodation, what condescension, what humility. humility. Speaking of humility, we might think that Mary's lacking in this area when we read from behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed.

Reading this statement in isolation might cause us to think that maybe, just maybe, Mary's becoming a little proud, a little arrogant.

From now on, all generations will call me blessed. Who does she think she is? Yet as we look a little closer, we begin to see that it's not her status that's causing her to be blessed, but rather her saviour.

Verse 48, and this just shows the insight into where her focus was. Verse 48, for he has looked in the humble estate of his servant.

[48 : 21] For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed. For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

What's Mary doing? Is she bringing the glory to herself? No, she's not. This humble girl is attributing all the glory and the honour and the praise to her Lord and her saviour.

I'm a teenage girl in this nowhere of a town, and he's chosen me. He's done great things for me. Holy is his name.

And what an example for us to follow. We are, are we not, so bound up and so caught up with ourselves? I don't know if it's our culture, but it's true.

In conversation, as Christians, we are bemoaning our own hearts, our own lack of obedience, and there's a place for that, undoubtedly.

[49 : 30] But remember what McShane said, for every look at yourself, take ten looks to Christ. That should be, that should be a resolution, all of us, in the coming year.

For every look at yourself, take ten looks to Christ. That's what Mary does. She doesn't, and this is important, she doesn't labour on her own unworthiness, and some faux godliness, or holiness.

She doesn't do that. But rather, she does reflect on the fact that she is an ordinary girl in an ordinary town. This thought all the more causes her to worship.

Holy is his name. And as we reflect upon ourselves, and as we despair, Christian friend, you may be despairing at the minute as you look in your own heart, and we do.

We're not what we would like to be, far from it. But friends, let's not stop there, because that can be such a toll from the evil. The Bible tells us that the evil one is the accuser of the brethren.

[50 : 47] That's what he wants us to do. He wants us to look at ourselves and stop there. Stop. Because in being so saturated in our own, dare I say it, self-pity, we're not looking to Jesus.

We're not magnifying his name. We're not praising the glory of who he is, and because of that we're not blessed. For every look at yourself, take ten looks to Christ.

That's what Mary does. But she doesn't leave it there. And of course, we could spend a lot more time on this. We're just very much galloping through this song together.

Time is going. she doesn't leave it there. Because what we see is in a true and a right spirit of communion of the saints, and that's what it is to be a Christian.

We're not in isolation. Yes, we acknowledge ourselves, we acknowledge all the more the wonder of who Jesus is, but we don't do it on our own.

[51 : 54] We're part of a church. We're part of a bride. We're part of a family. And we see this in verses 50 to 53.

Because what we see there is that she praises the Lord, not just for his work in her life, but also in the lives of all of his people.

And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. And so really, tonight, if you are one of the Lord's, you are just as special as Mary.

You are numbered amongst those from generation to generation who fear him and who know his mercy. And that is what you identify in, his mercy, his grace, his love.

That's what makes you you as one of the Lord's people. people. But Mary's more specific. She says in verse 51, he has shown strength with his arm.

[53 : 07] Those who couldn't help themselves, he has helped. Those who in their own strength could do nothing, he has strengthened. And that goes for all of us really, because Christians, we don't and we can't really go through life with any kind of steely determination of our own.

Far from it. We know there are some Christians who are very strong Christians. Before they were Christians, they had strong personalities and so they seem to soldier on through all kinds of difficult and different circumstances.

But yet ultimately we need the strength of his arm. And to have and to accept the strength of his arm, we need something else that Mary touches on.

Humility. Humility. And I think that's maybe where many of us go wrong before we're saved. we rely on our own strength.

We're scared to give ourselves over fully to the Lord. Maybe that's you tonight. Are you a Christian? Why are you not a Christian?

[54 : 25] What's the reason? What's holding you back? All kinds of different answers could be given. But ultimately and I speak the truth in love I hope.

It's because we don't have the humility to come to God. There's something we're holding back. We're going not in the strength of his arm but our own.

And that's a place of bondage because we'll never get out of it. And Mary refers to this. He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts and he has brought down the mighty from their thrones.

That's what he does for any of us tonight who really in our hearts say I will not have this man to rule over me. And you know it's one thing coming to church and it's good coming to church.

But the Lord wants more than the outward. He needs more than the outward. You need more than the outward. We need to have the humility of heart to say I can't Lord but you can.

[55 : 42] He scatters the proud in their thoughts but he exalts those of humble estate. Isn't that wonderful? Matthew 23 12 ironically the very baby that she's carrying in her womb would later go on to share this sentiment.

whoever exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted. And that's it in a nutshell.

At the end of 2023 if you're not a Christian tonight it's because we will not humble ourselves to acknowledge that we need Jesus.

we caveat it with reasons maybe why we're not Christians maybe we blame the church or we blame other Christians I don't know we've all been there myself included but ultimately it comes to the point where we won't humble ourselves.

He's exalted Mary in her situation but more importantly in her salvation salvation and you know friend tonight he can exalt you too in the self same way to be and this is wonderful this is the hope of Christmas he can exalt you to be a child of the king.

[57 : 07] Do you want to be a child of the king? Well if you do Mary makes clear in the song that which awaits you if your heart is humble and willing if you're hungry after God verse 53 he has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty.

Those who in their own estimation have everything they need in this world and refuse God will eventually be sent away empty but those who find themselves putting their trust in the Lord spiritually speaking will have eternal riches beyond all measure.

I can't show you these riches I can point you to them I can't make you appreciate them you need the Holy Spirit for that but pray please pray pray that the Spirit will open your heart and your mind and your eyes so that you too can see the beauty of King Jesus.

I always remember an elder you might remember this yourself he's gone home to glory since he would say in his prayer that in Christ we are multi-millionaires so it is riches beyond all measure eternity to gain and eternity with Christ himself.

Do you want it? Do you want him? Well he's here tonight and he wants you if you come to him.

[58 : 56] Finally this last stanza of Mary's song it's one that ties everything up referring to the security that believers have in the Lord and the security that the babe in her womb would provide he has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to her fathers to Abraham and his offspring forever.

Remember Israel. We all know the story of Israel. Israel were wayward, they were God's people yet they were disobedient time and time and time again discontented not happy with God's provision with them and what did God do?

He remembered them. He has helped his servant Israel. He remembers his promises to you, to me, to all of us.

He doesn't forget. We let go of him, we do. When we think about our own experience in the year that's gone by, we've let go of him many times time. But never ever will he let go of us.

And that, dear friends, is a cause for praise, for adoration, for encouragement, not only for Mary, but for everyone who is blessed among men and among women.

[60 : 28] And you know, there's no secret to how Mary was such a godly young girl. well, it's quite simple.

How did she have such a firm grasp of who God was? Quite simply, friends, because she spent time with God. She knew the scriptures.

How do we know that? Well, a lot of what she says here, it can be found either in the Psalms or in Hannah's song and in 1st Samuel 2, you can read it yourself when you go home and you'll see how Mary has drawn from the scriptures to inform her own praise.

And what a lesson for us as to how important it is just to have God's word stored up in our hearts so that we can return thanks to God with what he has already given to us.

Time has gone, but as we leave Mary song this evening, I'd like to ask you a question. Tonight, Christmas Eve 2023, do you have a Magnificat in your life?

[61 : 51] Is the song that we have before you a song that you can sing and a song that you do sing? a song of praise and adoration for all that is yours in the gospel?

Is this your song? Well, if it's not, friend, know this. Mary's song can be your song. Not because God will dwell in your womb, God will be your God will dwell in your heart.

But far more impressive than that, it's because God by his spirit can dwell in your heart. Isn't that something?

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Doesn't matter how young you are, just look at Mary. Doesn't matter how old you are, you might think your time is gone.

He is more than willing, more than willing, so that you can be able to say, and I close with this, I have been crucified with Christ.

[63 : 01] It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

That that song would be your song at the end of this year. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for Mary's song, a song that can this evening be our song.

And we pray that it would be so for those who are unsaved, that they would come to know something of the Saviour in this way.

And for those of us who are saved, that we would have rekindled within us a fresh appreciation of who we are in Christ, what he has done, what he is doing, and what he will do for us, leading us to a spirit of praise and adoration.

you are worthy, O Lord, worthy is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Let us look upon you as such, day by day.

[64 : 23] Let us come with humble hearts that worship and that seek to see your name high and lifted up. Part us then with your blessing, we pray.

Be with our brother as he leads us in our final item of praise. And forgive us for all our many sins we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen. Friends, we're going to conclude singing to God's praise from Psalm 36.

Sing Psalms 36, reading at verse 5 of the Psalm. Again, a reminder to us of the fact that the love of God, it's not ebbing and flowing, like maybe our love to one another, or the love of the things of this world.

It's steadfast. Your steadfast love, verse 5, is great, O Lord. It reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

high. Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep. Your justice is like ocean depths, both man and beast you keep.

[65 : 49] we're going to sing four verses to the end of the verse of Mark 9, to the praise of God, your steadfast love is great, O Lord. own to one strength, there seems to really to help line to bringUST can they lie your faithfulness is wonderful Fall extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is neglected Like mountains high on sea.

Your justice is like ocean tacks. For man and peace to keep.

And precious is your steadfast love. What confidence it glings.

Oh, I am, oh, I'm sheltered in the shadow of your wings.

[67 : 43] They feast within you as I'm drained from streams of beauty light.

Father, with you is the source of light.

In your light we see light. We'll conclude with a benediction.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, rest on and abide with you now and forevermore.

Amen.