

Luke 1:46-56 Early AM

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[0 : 00] Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we praise you. We praise your holy name as we continue to celebrate what you have done, is doing, and will do in this Advent season.

Prepare our hearts as you speak to us through your words that we may learn to magnify and exalt you. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

Please be seated. As we enter the third week of Advent, today's scripture offers to show us how Mary had responded to the incarnation of Christ with her joyous song that magnifies the Lord.

To begin, we will first look at Mary's spiritual journey that eventually led to her renowned response of what is now known to many as the Magnificat.

Next, we are going to unpack Mary's song and highlight how Mary magnifies the Lord. After which, we will finally reflect on how Mary's song can be an inspiration for our responses to the incarnation today.

[1 : 16] First, let's recall how it all began for Mary. Today, you and I may be familiar with how Mary found out the life-changing news of her becoming Jesus' birth mother.

Let's not forget that the young and engaged teen was in for a shock at first. Verses 28 and 29 from chapter 1 of Luke tell us what happened as the angel Gabriel visited Mary.

Gabriel then began to announce God's plan for Mary to conceive and bear a baby as a virgin.

But not just any baby. Mary was told from verse 32 that he will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end.

Such news was unexpected and reasonably beyond comprehension. The idea of conceiving as a virgin was already inconceivable and to carry the Son of the Most High must be overwhelming for this young woman from Nazareth.

[3 : 03] And how was she to make sense of the fact that this king who would reign eternally was to arrive in such a humble manner?

As she was taking in every single word she'd heard not surprisingly Mary's initial response in verse 34 shows us she had at least one question in mind.

How will this be since I am a virgin? Gabriel went on to explain not only proclaiming the power of the Most High but also testifying to Mary how her relative Elizabeth was pregnant in her old age in verse 36.

Gabriel reassured Mary in verse 37 that for nothing will be impossible with God. Mary's response in verse 38 was admirable.

from greatly troubled initially to seeking comprehension and at this point Mary said behold I am the servant of the Lord let it be to me according to your word.

[4 : 22] Her simple and direct response shows submission and humility. yet it wasn't until what happened next that set the stage for Mary's song.

Mary then set out to visit Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the baby who was to be born as John the baptizer leaped for joy in her womb.

Filled with the Holy Spirit Elizabeth began to exclaim with a loud cry from verse 42 Blessed are you among women 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 leaped for joy and blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

This was such encouragement and reassurance from the Holy Spirit through the words of Elizabeth which ultimately led to today's passage.

[5 : 39] In response to God's mysterious yet wondrous works Mary was no longer greatly troubled. She was no longer asking questions.

There was more to her response than being simply submissive and humble. This time she responded wholeheartedly as she said from verse 46 My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Let's dive in and see where this spontaneous expression of her emotions is leading to. Verse 48 for he has looked on 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.

Mary was proclaiming what God had done for her personally lifting her up from a humble servant to someone who will be called blessed by all generations.

Moving forward though Mary's focus changed. It was no longer about what God had done for her. Verse 50 And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

[7 : 11] He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the thought of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate.

He has filled the hungry with good things and 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.

in this latter part of her praise song she gave a detailed account of the mercy that God had shown his people throughout history which was significantly more extensive than her own testimony at the beginning.

This change of lens from focusing on God's work on herself to what he did for his people is the perfect illustration of how Mary magnifies the Lord.

So what does magnify mean? Apart from referring to the definition of the word in Greek which literally means to make bigger we can also easily relate to what magnifying something looks like as we think of a magnifying glass.

[8 : 38] With the help of a magnifying glass we can zoom in on an object we want to look at making it bigger so that we can see more details.

Imagine putting your hand under a magnifying glass. While it's fascinating to be able to see your fingerprints zooming in means you can no longer see your fingers or your hand from which your fingerprints are found.

When you focus on the magnified fingerprints you are actually missing out on seeing your hand in action and the great things it is capable of doing.

Interestingly Mary was magnifying the Lord in a reversed kind of way instead of zooming in and focusing only on what God had done for her Mary's magnifying glass helped her zoom out and saw the big picture the big picture of God's big story.

By zooming out she saw God's work consistently portraying reversals throughout history humbling the proud and raising the lowly just as how God rejected King Saul for his disobedience and pride and chose a lowly shepherd boy David a man after God's own heart to become king of Israel.

[10 : 14] By zooming out Mary saw herself as part of the big picture in God's works experiencing first hand his work of reversal as God lifts her up.

As a nobody from Nazareth as a young woman she was chosen chosen to fit into the plan of the Almighty One chosen to be the mother of the Lord the Lord as the prophets had spoken of who was to arrive humbly as God incarnate and who would also be sacrificing for all mankind as the ultimate reversal.

So what does it look like for us to magnify the Lord today? Although Mary's experience is one of a kind and incomparable we can still relate to how God puts us into unsettling circumstances.

After struggling our way from being troubled to submissive are we able to magnify the Lord as Mary had shown us?

As we zoom out from our own personal story the way Mary did we are magnifying the Lord.

Zooming out puts us into perspective allowing us to see how God was at work is working and helps us trust how this faithful God will continue to work in the future just as he had promised.

[11 : 53] When Mary zoomed out and magnified the Lord she saw how God had done great things on his people. Similarly when we zoom out and magnify the Lord today do we see what great things God had done on and through Mary?

as we zoom out we are also reminded of how our personal story fits into God's work in reversal.

However small we may feel God will look on the humble estate of his servants and he will lift us up just as he had lifted Mary.
however small we may feel God can do great things through us just as how he had done great things through Mary.
Lord help us to magnify you today. Amen.