

The Magnificat of Mary and the Bible

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[0 : 01] Today I want to go over a passage in Luke chapter 1. Sorry, media guys, that was on me entirely. And while maybe the Christmas message has been prolonged for you, it is important to look at this passage.

I call this a flyover passage. There are those passages in Scripture, especially between narratives, between story, where we sort of get to it and we just read over it, especially if there's Old Testament quotes in it.

We just kind of fly over that passage. We want to get to the next part of the story. And often we don't dig deep into these passages, and I felt like that for a very long time. Today's passage is going to be Luke chapter 1, verses 46 to 55, but I am big on context.

I don't like jumping into a passage without understanding what has just happened beforehand. And so one of the things we teach at Arnold Youth is context, context, context. We always must understand what is going on in the story before we continue actually getting into God's Word.

So if you would join me in verse 26, and I will just read what has happened right before our scene. This is the famous passage I'm sure you are aware of. It says, In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David.

[1 : 16] And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, Greetings, O favored one! The Lord is with you! But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

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

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.

And Mary said to the angel, How will this be, since I am a virgin? And the angel answered her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore the child to be born will be called Holy, the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

[2 : 23] For nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, Behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

And the angel departed from her. 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, 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. And now we come to what is famously known as the Magnificat.

[3 : 23] And I've heard this term before, but honestly, whenever I heard the term Magnificat, I thought of a magnificent cat. And when I told my students that I was preaching on the Magnificat, one of my students spent the rest of our Bible study drawing a magnificent cat that I will never get out of my head.

But it actually comes from the very beginning in verse 46, where Mary's going to say, my soul magnifies the Lord. And when the word magnifies was translated from Greek into Latin by the Roman Catholic Church, the word was Magnificat.

And that just became the word which encompassed our entire passage, verses 46 to 55. This is a glorification of the Lord. And so, would you join with me as we read it, verses 46 to 55.

And Mary said, 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 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.

[4 : 30] 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 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 her fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

And then just to conclude this little passage, and Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home. Before we continue, I just want to say this is a wonderful pulpit.

Whoever built this, I heard it was people here. Well done. I'm used to a flimsy music stand that is incredibly obnoxious. I like to sometimes lean forward and it looks really bad when you're preaching, and then suddenly you drop a foot. So well done, whoever.

Let's just pray, and then let's break this down. Heavenly Father, we are so very grateful to be in your presence. While this has been for some a very, very difficult Christmas, Father, you see our family in the tragic circumstances that have arisen this week.

[5 : 32] You see we too suffer, and yet we are grateful to be in your presence with your saints on your day to worship and magnify your name. Father, may you be glorified by all that we say, all that we do, and all that we sing here.

Father, may you help our hearts to heal. May you help us now to be attentive to your word. May you break hearts of stone, give us hearts of flesh, and help us to grow more in love with you so that, Father, we would be a light and a beacon here in Squamish and for our church family in Abbotsford, to the nations, to all the people who are around them.

Father, that we would preach your word, that hearts would come to know you, and that we would live in obedience to you in response to what it is that you've done and what it is you teach us through your word. In your name, Jesus, we pray.

Amen. All right. Before we, even when I first looked at this passage, I really struggled with how am I going to preach this passage.

There's many ways to take it, and I do believe that in Scripture there is an author, it is the Holy Spirit who is guiding the narrative, who has a point to make. And so generally, when it comes to a passage, there is one way to understand that passage.

[6 : 37] Faithfully, through hermeneutics, we break down what the Scripture says in context, understanding the message. But this is one of those passages that you could preach many different ways. And I really struggled with how exactly do I hit this passage?

Do I focus on first if, as we read earlier on, in 1 Samuel 2, verses 1 through 10, we see the prayer of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, the prophet. A birth that is miraculous in nature.

A birth for a prophet who's going to come and lead and judge Israel faithfully. And we see the parallels in verses 1 through 10 are just parallel to these verses right here.

And we could just compare the two for a whole sermon. We could look at the fact that everything that Mary is now about to say in this song or this poem, it alludes to at least 11 passages in the Old Testament from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms encapsulating the entire Old Testament which shows us that Mary clearly knows the Scriptures.

Her father was probably a godly man who raised her and saturated her in the Word of God and she would have been somebody who would have been meditating and thinking on the Scriptures regularly. Otherwise, how else could she quote so much Scripture and so comfortably flow with it and make it her own as she cries out to God?

[7 : 52] And so we could look at that. We could focus on some of the major themes in this passage. We see the theme of pride and humility contrasted multiple times. We see the theme of everything that it says here is attributed towards what God has done because God is the one who

accomplishes all things.

He's the one who deserves all of the glory. And we could just focus on that. We could focus on this constant theme of deliverance and judgment, salvation and condemnation. And when we go over this, we're going to look at all of those.

Not in great length. You're not going to be here for morning, afternoon, and evening service all as one. But the main point I want to make is that which Mary is making. It's all glorifying and magnifying God.

And I would argue that this isn't just the magnification or the magnificat of Mary, but rather all of Scripture is unanimous with Mary in what it gives glory to God to. And as we look at what God has done and we give Him glory for that, we learn more about who He is and we are to respond in worship to Him.

And that's Mary's ultimate point and what will be our point. And before we even break this down, there's, this passage is actually to be broken down into three sections. If you'd look with me, verses 46 to 49, Mary is magnifying God for what He has done specifically for her.

[9 : 11] Everything is what God has done directly and personally for Mary. In verses 50 to 53, it's about what God does for man, how God interacts with mankind.

And in verse 54, 55, specifically, she is magnifying God for what He does for Israel. And we know, according to what Paul says in Romans, that we are children of faith, therefore we are part of Abraham's descendants and therefore we are part of Israel.

And so verse 54 and 55 is the final section and that's what God has done for Israel. And so join with me in the very beginning, 46 to 49, as we break those down. We'll look first at 46 and 47.

And Mary said, my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. And even right there, we have to pause because there's just so much in this passage.

My soul magnifies the Lord. What does it mean to magnify? It's one of those words that in English we don't use very often today. The word magnify, its technical definition is to make great.

[10 : 16] To deem or declare great or to esteem highly. Mary is esteeming the Lord highly. She is declaring the greatness of his works. But we have to ask, can you really make God's name great?

Can we make God greater than he is? Can we add anything to him? I like that a woman on this side is already shaking no, absolutely not. Good theology here. BK, well done. Now, Adam Clark in his commentary, I disagreed with some of the things he wrote, but he had this great quote about magnifying God.

He says, nothing can be added to God for he is infinite and eternal. Therefore, the way to magnify him is to show forth and celebrate those acts in which he manifested his greatness.

We declare the great things that God has done and in that we ascribe or we give him glory. We esteem him highly. We make him great by declaring what he has done and who he is.

And that's what Mary is doing here. All of this is a poem or a song of praise, esteeming God highly for everything that he has done for her, for men, and for the church.

[11 : 25] And it's interesting that she says, my soul and my spirit. And while scripture sometimes will use those words interchangeably, which makes it confusing, there is a difference. Even in the Greek here, we see the two words used are psyche and pneuma.

And this is not the main point of Mary, so it won't be a major point of mine, but what Mary is essentially saying is with all that I am, spiritually, and my entire being with all that I am, I magnify the Lord.

I esteem him highly. I rejoice in him. This is an overwhelming sense of she just wants to worship and make known the great things that the Lord has done.

And she is rejoicing in God who is her Savior. And this is a really important note for us. See, the Catholic church would understand this very differently.

They would say that Mary here saying that she needs a Savior is just in the cultural context here rather than the understanding that Mary is a sinner and she too needs a Savior. You see, some would understand this that Mary being a faithful Jew grown up according to the law would be under the oppression of the Roman army and the Roman society and so therefore she sees the Messiah as one who's going to come and liberate her people.

[12 : 40] And while there is an element of truth in that, really the only person who sees that they need a Savior is a sinner or one who is in oppression, one who is in bondage and Mary being a faithful Jew who understands the Old Testament would have been raised to understand that she is

a sinner.

She is in need of a Messiah. And here she recognizes that God is her Savior. In Matthew 1, verse 21, we have this encounter where Joseph, the betrothed, the fiancé, so to speak, of Mary, finds out that she is pregnant.

And he immediately as a law-abiding Jew thinks, I must divorce her. This is unrighteous what she has done. But in his compassionate heart for her, he wants to divorce her quietly and so he's planning how he's going to do this.

And during the night, an angel comes to him and we're only going to look at verse 21. The angel says, she, referring to Mary, will bear a son. And you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.

Now a conversation would have had to happen between Joseph and Mary because right after this she goes to be with Elizabeth and then comes back and her and Joseph leave to Bethlehem. And so Mary has heard from Joseph that the one she is to give birth to is the one who's going to save their people from their sins.

[13:57] And so when she recognizes God as Savior, she recognizes him as Savior from the wrath of God and the sins which we have accumulated, the debt that we owe to a righteous and holy God, not simply a military liberator.

And Mary here recognizes that God is her Savior, that she is in need of salvation, that she too is guilty. And there is no passage in all of the New Testament or even if you want to go look in all of the Old Testament, there is nothing to point to the immaculate conception of Mary, that Mary herself was sinless and without sin, that because she was the mother of Christ that the Lord prevented her from any sin.

That's just not found in Scripture. Mary with her own mouth recognizes God is my Savior and she rejoices in God who is her Savior. And she sees what is happening now as part of that salvation process which God has initiated even for her.

And so her soul and her spirit, her whole being is magnifying the Lord, rejoicing in Him. He is her Savior and He is her Lord. And we'll touch on that a little bit more.

Verse 48 says, For He has looked on the humblest state of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. Right there, there's, in verse 48 and 49 she says, for, giving the reason for why she is magnifying God specifically.

[15:24] And here it is that God has looked on the humblest state of His servant. The word humblest state here actually carries within the Greek a sense of humiliation.

Mary is in a humiliated state and God has been mindful of her. And before we even look at that humiliated state which is important, how wonderful a truth is it that God is mindful of people. He is mindful of us. And this just flies in the face of so much of what is popular theory today that if there is a creator, there is a God that He would establish the world, that He would set it into motion and He would distance Himself away.

And there's this idea that God is aloof, He's distant, He's far off. In pagan religions we remember the story of Elijah, I believe it's on Mount Carmel where it's him versus the prophets of Baal and they're saying whoever calls down fire from heaven that God is truly God.

And the prophets of Baal are crying out to God and Elijah says maybe your God is asleep. Maybe He's using the bathroom, you should wake Him up, yell louder, get His attention. Where is He?

[16:33] And yet our God is not like that, rather He is mindful of His servants. You know, that is a very, very helpful truth today.

I know that some of you are struggling and suffering here on this earth right now, especially with the loss of loved ones. Last Sunday, my grandfather died and as if that wasn't painful enough, the very next day we found out tragic news in regards to my mother's health and cancer.

And we're in this place of hurting, in this place of feeling alone, in this place of suffering here on earth. How do we process all of this? And we have this grief, while at the same time there's this joy of Christmas and we want to celebrate.

And in this place I am reminded that God is mindful of me, that God is mindful of my family. God has not forgotten us, but even in our insignificance living in the Berry Valley of Canada, God sees us.

But this is elevated even greater. How mindful is God? It's even greater when you look at the humble state of Mary. This humiliated state. Now some would argue that Mary is in a humiliated

state because she's pregnant outside of wedlock.

[17 : 47] Now one, how contrasting is that from our time today where that is no longer shameful but now just a normal thing? But secondly, that's just not the case here.

And we know that. Mary is not ashamed of her pregnancy. One, we've already been told earlier that the angel spoke to Joseph and told her that the one to come is going to save his people from their sins.

She has heard from the lips of the angel himself who comes with the message given to him directly by God that this is the promised child. This is the Messiah.

This is the one who is God with us. And this is what God has done. In verse 49 she's going to mention that God has done mighty things for her and the things that she's referring to is this pregnancy.

So in no way is Mary ashamed that she is about to give birth to this child. This whole Old Testament is full of stories of barren woman and woman longing to have children.

[18 : 46] Why? Not only because you could carry on the legacy and children are a blessing from the Lord but also because there was always this promise that one day one would come who would crush the head of the serpent.

The one from the lineage and the line of Abraham who would bless the whole world. The woman yearned for this. And so Mary is not shameful because there is nothing sinful or to be ashamed of here.

rather what it means by her lowly or her humble or her humiliated state is the fact that Mary is a nobody. Mary is not of wealth. Mary is not of reputation.

Mary is not of any significance. She is just a young virgin girl and guess what? There's a lot of those in Israel. We find the only identification of Mary in the earlier passages is simply that she's a virgin. That's all we find out about her again and again it calls her the virgin. That's it. Not the wonderful virgin who is the most faithful of all people. Simply you are the favored one. Why? Because God has found favor in you.

[19 : 45] Not because of anything you've done but because God has. And so Mary here it's not that she's humiliated because of her pregnancy but rather she is simply of a lowly estate and does that not magnify even greater how mindful our God is of his people.

That the lowliest nobodies God sees and is attentive to them. And not only that it's not only that God took notice of her but for behold continuing in verse 48 from now on all generations will call me blessed.

She will be remembered. And this is not a prideful boast of Mary she's simply magnifying esteeming God highly because of what he has done. What he has accomplished he has taken a nobody and now all generations will call her blessed and is that not true?

We call her the blessed mother of Jesus. Now not to be twisted with the Roman Catholic understanding that Mary is of a higher position or in closer proximity to Jesus therefore we can cry out or pray to her so that she will then go closer to Jesus and then pray for us.

This is not what it means for her to be called blessed. Now my mother is a very religious woman in a good way. And I remember when I was young I wanted to buy her a gift.

[21 : 02] I don't remember the occasion. I'm sure that whatever little pennies I had came from her. And I went to this place and I saw this beautiful candle. I really like bright colors and on this candle was this young Virgin Mary with a bright yellow halo around her head and green and pink robes which I highly doubt that's what color she wore.

But green and pink and then she had this beautiful blue head covering and cloth and I come from a Slavic like a Russian background. All the ladies wear head coverings.

It's like absolutely mandatory. And so like a beautiful blue head covering like my mother's gonna love this candle. And it's got the Virgin Mary there with her eyes and her head bowed in prayer and this halo around her.

I thought this is beautiful. And so I came and I gave this gift to my mother. Excited. I love gift giving. I spoil my wife every year. It's a habit I'm trying to like work on because it's unhealthy at this point. You can pray for us. And I love giving gifts and seeing the reaction of people. It's unhealthy because I expect way too much. And I give this candle to my mother and I'm just excited as a young boy.

[22 : 05] And my mother and please ladies if there's something to get from this story do not emulate my mother's response. She holds this candle and says every time Mary looks at one of these she cries in heaven. I don't think that Mary is perpetually crying in heaven over candles.

I don't think that's the point. I don't think theologically my mother was thinking it through. But the point is Mary is not sitting there receiving worship or praise or that she is highly exalted above all other people.

And my mother made that point very clear to me. But all generations will call her blessed because of what God has done for her. It's entirely because of God that Mary is fortunate.

It is not because of Mary herself. It is not her proximity to God. It is not her works for God. Though her faithfulness is to be admired and even patterned after, followed by.

We can learn from her faithfulness. But she even, in case you're a Roman Catholic here and you disagree, follow with me into verse 49. For he, therefore, therefore, all generations will call me blessed.

[23 : 11] Why? For, this is the reason. For he who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name.

He is mighty. He has done great things for her. He's not only been mindful of her, but he's now acted on her behalf. He has reached down through the heavens and has reached into her life.

He has personally come and there's been an encounter with Mary and he has done a great thing for her. What has he done? He has chosen her to be the mother of the Savior of the world.

He has done a great thing for her. And because of the great thing that God has done, that God has accomplished, that God has initiated, that God will bring to fulfillment, all generations will call her blessed.

None of this is directed at Mary. And Mary just bursts out in this praise, recognizing who this God is. Holy is his name.

[24 : 11] We have heard that a lot in the Old Testament. Holy is his name. Even if, you know, one of the things I try and tell my students on a regular basis is, let's pretend we've never read the Bible before.

Pretend you've never heard anything about God before. What could you learn just from these passages alone about this God of the Bible? That he's worthy to be praised. That he ought to be magnified. He ought to be esteemed highly for the things that he has done.

That we can rejoice in him and that he's not only God, but he's also Savior. That he looks, he's attentive, he sees, sees what's going on, and he does not discriminate between the high and the low, but he actually looks at the lowest of the low, and he's mindful of them, and he acts on their behalf, and he blesses them and makes them memorable for generations that he is mighty, that he does great works, and that his name and his character and his works are holy.

Amen. We could end right there. But we can't because BK said I had 40 minutes, so I get more.

Now, Mary transitions in verse 50 to 53. She's transitioning from magnifying God for what he's done for me, but now what God has done for man or how he interacts with people.

Verse 50, and his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. You know, verses 47, 48, 49, those can be a bit of a struggle for the Catholics.

[25 : 36] But 50 to 53, this is a real struggle for the North American church. This is not easy. This is not the God that we like to market to the people.

Why? And his mercy, beautiful, we love that, is for, and what do we generally say? It's for everybody. And in a sense, there is the common mercy of God for all.

It reigns on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you here are an unbeliever, scripture says that you are in rebellion, you are at war with God, and yet God sustains you by giving you breath to breathe out against him.

And yet he gives you this mercy and allows you to live and he sustains you with food and with a body that works and with people around you to support you. Yes, there is a sense that God's mercy is for all, but here Mary praises him.

And again, this is all copy-paste from the Old Testament. It is for those who fear him. There is a condition there. Now, there are two ways that this often gets twisted.

[26 : 43] I've, you know, I'm very fortunate. I grew up in the, in a very Russian church. And while that was terrible in many ways, there was some great benefits to that. And I didn't grow up in Canadian or English or North American Protestant churches.

And I've been very fortunate. I've been able to see the strengths and weaknesses of both as I've been able to work in both and be a part of both. And I've seen the North American community, how they generally do this is whenever we talk about the fear of God, we want to say, okay, now I just want to take a moment.

This is not actually talking about fear, fear. We're talking about respect and reverence. Yes, sort of. Absolutely in here, the idea of fearing God involves reverence and respect.

Without a doubt, that is part of what this word means. But it also means to fear him. That's why it said fear him. It didn't say respect and revere him. It says fear him, which involves those two.

And we've tried to diminish it because we don't want people to think that God is somebody to be feared, but rather that he's a boyfriend or a best friend who's going to come and hug you and fix all of your earthly problems here on earth. They're simply going to wipe away your tears and make you feel better.

[27 : 50] No, but scripture says we must fear him. That's part of receiving his mercy. Now the Russian church, and perhaps this is because there was the influence of the KGB and the mafia. I don't know. I'm not kidding.

That's part of it. I used to tell kids my family was in the mafia and they actually believed it. But there was this idea in the church that the second anybody wronged God, God was just waiting outside the church service with a club to take to your knees.

You know, there was this great fear that was stoked in our church that if you are in sin, watch out. God is going to get you in a car accident so that he gets a hold of your attention. I heard that.

And there was this fear that the second you did something displeasing to God, he was going to get you. And this is how the community interpreted terrible events that would happen to people.

Perhaps this is God pouring out his wrath on them because they're sinning. And both are a perversion of the truth here. We do fear God.

[28 : 54] Hate what is evil, cling to what is good. Why? Because God is a holy God and in the Old Testament and even in the New, we see that he is a holy set apart God who loves righteousness and hates unrighteousness.

And he does not ignore it even amidst his own community people. Ananias and Sapphira happen in the New Testament. They come and they lie in the church and what happens?

Immediate judgment. They are struck dead in the church. There is a sense that we fear God. I do not want to sin or make light of sin or even be in the presence of sin and ignore it and not stand apart from it.

Why? Because I fear God and I know he will act. If I am his child and he loves me, he will discipline me and that is for my good and I trust in that. And did you notice that if you look in scripture, I like how it was today said in the prayer about the hot coal that comes and touches the lip and takes away the iniquity of Isaiah.

What happens to Isaiah? He comes into the presence of Lord and what does he do? Okay, time to respect him. No, he doesn't need to sum up reverence. He says, woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips and woe am I for I live amongst the people of unclean lips.

[30 : 08] I am defiled by simply knowing and associating with sinners because that's how holy he is. And there is this sense of fear. John in the book of Revelation, what does he do when he sees Christ?

He falls as though he were dead. There is a fear, not a crippling fear, but a fear that we would hate evil, that we would love what is good, that we would desire to obey him.

And to those who fear God, his mercy is extended. Now we could get into the theology of that. You will not understand the fear of the Lord unless God has already begun to do a work in your heart and praise him for that.

But his mercy is for those who fear him. And it says from generation to generation. And parents, let this be an encouragement to you or perhaps even a warning.

If you are faithful to the Lord and you fear him in the way that you live your life, that will bless your children and your children's children. Because children who see that their parents do not make light of sin recognize that they too should not make light of sin.

[31 : 08] And if you make light of sin and you dabble in it and you continue on in unrepentant sin, there will be consequences for you and that will affect your children. They are not untouched by your iniquities.

They are impacted by it. But in the same way, and even to a greater extent, should you fear God and should you obey him, God will bless your children. And there will be blessings that will be poured out to them.

Continuing on in verse 51, perhaps some of the most strong language that evokes images of the Old Testament. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud and the thoughts of their hearts.

As soon as you hear in verse 51, he has shown strength with his arm, you immediately think back to the Exodus. With a strong and an outstretched and a mighty arm, our God has delivered us from the bondage of slavery in Egypt.

It is no wonder that the wise men of Pharaoh say, this is the finger of God against us. This is his hand that is delivering. This is his arm that fights for them. It evokes this Old Testament language that God fights for his people.

[32 : 11] That God has strength and he is not afraid to reach into mankind and use his strength. That he is willing to reach down into the affairs of men and impose his will and act in his righteousness.

And then you get this terrifying verse in 51 that just counters so much of what is considered moralistic living in North America where like, I can look but I just can't touch.

Or I can look good on the outside and I can go to church and I can appear good. But inwardly we're just rotten. And this verse condemns us strongly to our face.

Why? Because God will scatter those who are proud in the thoughts of their hearts. Because our God is a God who sees the depths of your heart. He sees your thoughts.

He knows everything you think. Which is striking because think if you are redeemed and bought by Christ, yet he still saved you. But for those who are prideful in their thoughts but look good on the outside, woe to you because God will scatter you.

[33 : 15] He will get rid of those people. With his strong and mighty arm he will dispose of the evil. There's this imagery here also of like chaff, of like that little bits of grass just blown away with a strong wind.

It's just gone before God. He will not let it sit in his presence. Continuing on, verse 52, it doesn't get more cheery but it's scripture. 52, he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate.

A lot of people maybe don't like this because it talks about the sovereignty and the omnipotence of God. But God does bring down mighty rulers. He raises them up and he brings them down. As God wills, so it happens.

And he brings down mighty thrones. Now this isn't only talking just about rulers because this is going to be talking about the prideful. This is those who are trusting in government, those who are trusting in power, those who are trusting in might. Those people he will bring down but rather as we've already seen with Mary, he will exalt the humble ones.

He will take the lowly and he will lift them up. The mighty he will throw down. The bringing down here isn't gentle. It's a fierce word. He will bring them down.

[34 : 24] There's a certainty to it and have we not seen that again and again in this story? He brings rulers up and he brings them down. Those who are powerful he makes weak.

Those who are weak he raises up and he uses them for his purpose. In 53, he has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty. Now, there's a double warning I have to give here.

One, just because there are those in abject poverty does not make them righteous and does not mean that God is going to fill them. And just because one is rich does not mean that God is automatically going to dispose of them.

Though we have to be careful because often here in North America when we see the rich, it's very easy to categorize ourselves not as those people and look at somebody richer than us. You know, for us in Abbotsford, it's well, we live in the countryside.

This is talking about the people on Eagle Mountain. You know, for you, it's well, this is just Squamish. It's nice, but it's no Whistler. You laugh because nobody wants to live in Whistler.

[35 : 27] Sorry if you're from Whistler. I don't know if that's an okay joke to make. I'm a youth pastor. I get more grace. It's not simply saying God loves the poor and God hates the rich. Look, there are righteous people who God has blessed financially and have the means to bless others and live a very wealthy life here.

And there are those who are in poverty and God looks at them and he hates the sin they practice, the life that they live, and the threats that they utter against God. This is more talking about, look, the hungry, those who are hungry.

What is he going to fill them with? Not biscuits. He's going to fill them with good things. What kind of hunger is this? This is those who are going to be hungering for righteousness. Those who hunger for the things of God.

And those who hunger, he will feed. He will provide. He will give them every good thing. I find it remarkable that Mary is proclaiming this to magnify God, to esteem him highly.

And about 31, 32 years later, Jesus is going to come on the scene and he's going to say to a great host of people, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.

There's a great similarity there.

[36 : 39] God will fill the hungry with good things, but those who are rich, those who trust in their wealth, those who are content apart from God, those he will send away empty.

And I just need to make this point, verses 50 to 53. Do you notice that Mary is praising God for all of this, not selective parts of it? She equally praises God for the fact that he is showing strength with his arm.

But equally so that he's going to scatter the proud. She praises and magnifies God. She is making his name great. She's declaring the greatness of God. Why? Because he brings the mighty down from their thrones.

He brings judgment. And yet at the same time, equally so, not in greater measure, but equally so, she praises God that he exalts the lowly and the humble. You see, Mary recognizes, as does the entire Old Testament, God is to be magnified and praised for all that he does, not just what we find palatable.

Not what we just find tasty or good about God, the parts that sound pleasant. But rather, God is to be worshipped for who he is and for what he has done because he is perfectly righteous and his attributes do not contend against one another.

[37 : 51] But rather, in perfect harmony like the Trinity, they complement and fit together. And God is to be worthy, or God is worthy and to be praised for all of it. For filling the hungry with good things.

And also for sending away the rich empty-handed. And I tell my youth, and it's a hard thing to imagine, but on the day of judgment, when we stand in the presence of God and all of the angels and Christ is there, and he puts us to the right and those who oppose God to the left, we will not sit there mourning the judgment of God.

But rather, we will praise and exalt him because he is perfectly righteous, he is perfectly holy, he is perfectly loving, and he is perfectly right in everything that he decrees and he does. And we will worship him as the host of heaven does.

And then, verses 54 and 55, Mary transitions to the third part, magnifying God, making him great for what he has done for Israel. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his offspring forever.

How is it that the Lord God has helped Israel? Here he helps Israel by remembering to be merciful to them. He remembers the mercy has extended to them in the past.

[39 : 09] And what is she talking about? It's about the child that has been sent. The child that is in her womb right now. She sees this as the help for Israel.

This is the fulfillment of what was spoken to Abraham and to his offspring forever. I know that you guys use the ESV and I love it. I think it is a phenomenal translation.

I very rarely like to say, you know, in the NIV, though it's a good translation. In the NIV here, it says, just as he promised. And I like how it states that because it shows that God has fulfilled what he has promised in remembering to be merciful to Israel exactly as he said he would.

And of course it's that way. God is not one that lies. God does not change. And so if God promises something, he will fulfill it exactly as he said.

And Mary is recognizing that the birth of this child is exactly as God had said that it would be. This is the help for Israel. This is the fulfillment of the promise. This is what we've been waiting for all this time.

[40 : 13] This is the time. This is the moment. Here it is. The great patriarch Abraham. This is what God was talking about. And Isaac and Jacob and all those who came after David, the mighty king and Solomon and all his splendor.

This is what they were all looking forward to. This is what was promised. This child, it is in this physical way that God has remembered to be merciful to us. And praise God that he is remembered to be merciful to Israel.

It's not when it talks about God remembering here. It's not as though God forgot. And then Mary comes on the scene and God goes, oh, I was so busy. Jesus, go.

It's not a response of God in the sense that God has forgotten. Now he's suddenly remembered. Brother, God has always remembered that he will be merciful. And how has he done it? By in the right time, he has sent the promised Messiah, Jesus.

Both God and man to come for Israel. This is the promise that was made to Abraham, but not only to him, but all the offspring afterwards. This is the Old Testament has been pointing and awaiting this.

[41 : 26] The angels long to see what God was going to do. And behold, the time has come to really see it manifested. And so God is to be worshipped. I want to point out one more theme.

I had mentioned it earlier. If you just overlook this whole thing, Mary magnifies the Lord and she rejoices in God. Why? He is the Savior. He has looked. He has been mindful.

All generations will now call her blessed. Why? Because of what he has done. And he is mighty. And he does great things. And his name is holy.

And he extends mercy. And he is the one who shows strength with his arm. He is the one who interjects into human society and into life. He is the one who scatters the proud.

He is the one who sees the innermost depths of their hearts and their minds. He is the one who brings down the mighty from their throne. Showing his omnipotence and that he is greater. He is the one who exalts those who are humble.

[42 : 22] He is the one who fills the hungry and knows their desire. He is the one who sends away the rich even though they are the ones that we often want to accept. He is the one who helped Israel.

Israel did not help him. He is the one who remembered. He is the one who is going to be merciful. He is the one who spoke to the fathers. He is the one who made the promises to Abraham and the descendants afterwards.

And he is the one who fulfills it exactly as he said he would. And Mary is not alone in this. All of the Old Testament scriptures and the New Testament affirms this. This is not simply the magnificat of Mary.

This is the magnificat of all scripture. He is worthy to be praised. For his salvation and his judgment. For his forgiveness and his condemnation.

For his lifting up and his bringing low. For his looking into our hearts and seeing the wretchedness of it. And yet atoning for our sins and covering over them.

[43 : 17] And at the same time sending away the unrighteous saying, Away from me I never knew you. He is worthy to be praised for all of it. In all times, in all circumstances, our God is worthy to be praised.

But only if he is the God of the Bible. You can't worship the God of your imagination like this. A God who is only loving and never judgmental.

A God who never condemns people. That's not the biblical God. And that's not a God worthy to be praised. Because he does not hate evil. But the God that Mary looks at. The God that Mary praises. He is worthy to be praised for all of it. And I'm so very thankful for this God. But just in case. Perhaps you don't know this God.

Perhaps you are prideful in your heart. Your thoughts are hidden from those around you. And you might look clean. Know this. God sees your heart. And he is aware.

[44 : 23] And scripture here in this beautiful poem. Or song that magnifies him. Is a deep and disturbing warning to you. If you do not know him. If you do not bow your knee.

To this promised fulfillment. That was made to Abraham. And those after. This Messiah which is Jesus. Of which we sang greatly beforehand. In the songs. If you don't know him. You will be scattered.

You will be thrown away. You will be brought down. From your lofty place. And God will condemn you. And yet should you hear his word today. In the spirit of God.

Be working on your heart. Mercy is extended to you. Behold here is the olive branch. You don't need to come forward. You don't need to yell. You don't need to dance. Simply bow your heart to

the king of heaven.

Cry out that he would give you faith. That he would wash away your sins. And that when Christ said. It is finished on the cross. That it would truly apply to you. And that all of your wickedness.

[45 : 21] And all of your loneliness. And all of your brokenness. Before a righteous and holy God. Would be washed away. Crimson no more. White as snow they are now. That can be for you today.

Truly the greatest Christmas gift. The gift of salvation. Through the exclusive salvation. That is offered only in the name of Jesus Christ. And for those of you who are saints.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. Take hope. Because the God who fulfilled everything. Just as he said he would. The God who is never changing. Also will fulfill.

And do exactly as his promise. In the rest of this book. That there is coming a day. Where every single tear will be wiped away. Where there will be no more sorrow.

Where we will be filled with the good things. That God gives us. An abundance of joy. And rejoicing in his presence. No more darkness. But rather the light of God.

[46 : 18] Always in our midst. That we will have fellowship together. Never ending joy. That all of the promises and the inheritance. That the New Testament talks about. Will be ours.

Not because of what we've done. But because of what Christ has accomplished for us. Are you hurting and lonely? Trust me. God is faithful. A day is coming. When he will make all things right. And as Mary magnified him.

And as scripture magnifies him. So too will we magnify him in his presence. With all of the angels. With all of those. Who have faithfully gone before us. Those who have shed their blood. Their tears. And have gotten on their knees. And confessed Jesus as Lord. We will be with them again. And there is great joy for us. Because of this Christ child. Who came and accomplished exactly what God sent him to do.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.