

# Song of Grace

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[ 0 : 00 ] If I took out a magnifying glass, came over to you and to your house and to your life and to your family and applied that magnifying glass to you, what would be the biggest things in your life?

If you went through my life about 10 years ago, the biggest things in my life were probably martial arts. I loved martial arts. I did martial arts. I watched martial art movies. I would talk about it. I would argue about which martial art was the best. I have strong opinions about that. We can fight later. That's okay. Not literally. It's okay. It was important. It was what I was focused on and it was a very large part of my life.

And then I had kids and the martial arts kind of had to be pushed to one side. The kids became one of the biggest things in my life. If you stopped in any vicinity near me, I would tell you stories about them.

I would show you photos. I would tell you how funny and cute and silly and how amazing they are at all these kinds of things. What is your life focused on?

[ 1 : 19 ] If I took that magnifying glass to your life, what would be the biggest things in your life? Is it your family? Your friends? Health? Education? Your loves? Your passions? Your hobbies?

When people think about you, what is the first kind of image? You know, when people are thinking and planning what to get you for Christmas, I'm hoping there's somebody thinking and planning to get you something for Christmas.

What are they thinking? Are they thinking, you know, that Tom, do you know what? He really needs an ugly Christmas sweater. You know, he really needs Kanye West's new album.

You know, that man needs these things. What do people think about when they think of us? What have we turned our lives towards so that when people see us, they see this as the biggest part of our lives?

We all have things in our lives that we magnify because they make us who we are. They give us meaning and significance. We can feel valued because I have a job.

[ 2 : 20 ] I'm the guy who loves martial arts. I'm the guy with these three kids. Now, I'm not that unique. I've got kids. I'm not that unique. I'm not unique in that I was into martial arts.

But how do we decide about the things that we choose to magnify in our lives? How do we decide? Do we actually sit down and think, I'm going to be this type of person?

Or do we just stumble into magnifying certain things in our lives? And so if we all do it, a question that we need to ask is, why this thing?

Am I chasing this because it brings me significance? Is this really what should define who I am? It's Christmas time. I'm excited for Christmas.

Is anybody else excited for Christmas? I'm really enjoying singing with you today, particularly that end of amazing grace where it was just our voices. It was a delight to sing with you.

[ 3 : 21 ] And so this season, we're going to spend a little bit of time looking at some of the songs in the lead up to Christmas. Today, we're looking at a song known as the Magnificat.

It's Mary's song. And in this song, Mary calls us to make God the largest in our lives. To magnify him.

All because of God's grace towards us. This 15-year-old girl living in a backwater town is going to challenge us to make God the biggest thing in our lives.

As we are loved by him, let that be what defines us as people. So as we have a look at this song, let me pray for us. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, that we can be gathering, that we can be singing with our voices loudly in praise to you.

Father, as we consider the things that we magnify in our lives, Father, be placing that magnifying glass on us. Fill us with your spirit, that we would carefully consider what we value in our lives, so

that we can value you more and more.

[ 4 : 30 ] Amen. We meet up with Mary in the Christmas story after she is pregnant with Jesus. She has visited her cousin, Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist.

And Elizabeth calls her blessed because she carries Jesus in her womb. She's been chosen by God to carry Jesus. And responding to all that God has already done in her life, choosing her to carry Jesus, she sings a song.

So please have your Bibles open. Please be bringing your Bible with you. Have your phone. If your phone is a distraction, make sure you put it on airplane mode.

Turn off notifications that might ding in the middle to distract you. And we're in Luke chapter 1. Mary sings, Mary sings, Mary starts by singing with all that she is.

She sings with her soul and her spirit. She is singing from the very depths of herself. This is not just a polite, I thank you God for letting me be the mother of Jesus.

[ 5 : 42 ] But she praises God from the beginning of this song with all that she has to the very depths of her being. And she glorifies the Lord. Now I don't often dive too deep into the original words in the Bible, but I found one word fascinating in this study.

The word for glorify comes from the Greek word megaluni. There's your new Greek word of the day, megaluni, which is this idea of magnifying, making something mega.

Megaluni, to make something mega. And it was translated into Latin as magnificat. And so that is where we get the name for this song from, magnificat.

And so Mary sings, wanting to megaluni, to magnify, to make God mega with the very depths of her soul.

But while we have the word magnify here, this is not like a magnifying glass. A magnifying glass takes something that is small and makes it larger.

[ 6 : 55 ] It megalunizes it. It makes it bigger before our eyes. If you remember being a kid with a magnifying glass, I would always point it at ants, much to my shame.

And all of a sudden, this tiny thing would become expanded in your view. But that is not what Mary is doing. She is not wanting to make the small God bigger before her.

God is infinite. He is already mega. Mary is reflecting on how great he is, how majestic and awesome. And she wants God to be mega in her life.

But why? Why? Why should God be the biggest thing in Mary's life? As a young, pregnant, unmarried woman, there are many other big priorities in her life.

Getting married to Joseph, building a house, having food, having some stability in life. She's just about to be a new mom. And I know what it's like to be a new dad, and that's hard enough.

[ 8 : 04 ] New mom, trying to take care of God himself. There are all kinds of big pressures on her life, calling to be the most important thing.

And yet, she wants God to be the biggest. God to be mega in her life. She wants God to be the biggest. God is what she wants her entire life to magnify.

And that's all because Mary is self-aware. She knows who she is, and she knows who God is. And she knows which of these two really should be the biggest.

Mary is rejoiced in God, my Savior. She doesn't see herself as the offspring of immaculate conception. Mary doesn't see that she's perfect, because only a sinner needs a Savior.

But her song also comes from a place of questioning. God, I want you to be the biggest thing in my life, but why me? Of all people. Verse 48.

[ 9 : 08 ] He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed, for the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name. Mary is just another young girl, in a backwater town, in a captive nation. And yet God chose the unworthy.

He was mindful of her. God has taken out the magnifying glass, and he zoomed in on this young girl. The God of the infinite universe, who is holding all things together by his will, causing the sun to rise and to set, holding gravity, and listening to billions of hearts beat at the same time.

This great God has this young, insignificant girl in his mind. God has lifted her up out of obscurity. And so Mary wants to magnify this God in her life, to make him mega, because of God's grace to her. Grace. God's unmerited love and favor.

[ 10 : 20 ] That he would not only be mindful of her, but that he would choose to give her a crucial role in the plans for salvation of the world. This is a song of unmerited grace.

Verse 50, His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. She knows her place before God. This song reveals her humility, and her lowliness.

And these are both marks of somebody who has stood before God, fully aware of their sins, what they deserve, and how they have received mercy.

She knows that she deserves nothing good from God. Can you imagine if she was the opposite? Can you imagine that if Mary was expecting good things from God? You see that over-inflated person who is full of pride, where they have become mega in their own eyes.

Can you imagine if Mary had said, Oh yeah, no, I actually deserve to be the mother of Jesus. I am going to be the best mother of Jesus. I'm going to be better than anybody. You've picked me, and you're lucky you picked me, because I'm going to really fix up this whole Israel situation.

[11:34] God, I deserve your favor. When we see this kind of arrogance and pride, it is distasteful. We can find it repugnant. Who is this person to speak like that?

And yet we can also struggle to sing a song like Mary's, where we ask that question, Who am I before you, Lord, that you would choose to have favor on me?

At some level, we can struggle thinking that we deserve good from God. Mary's song calls us to be in awe of God's gift, especially because we don't deserve it.

Why would you save me? God, why have you been mindful of me? God, you are mighty, but why are you mighty for me? Verse 49, It's not a full stop there.

He has done great things for me, this little person. One of my favorite things to do in life is to look at the stars.

[12:42] Anybody else enjoy looking at the stars? I really struggle living in a city looking at the stars, because there is so much light pollution, that you look at the stars and it's like, Oh, look, I can see five stars tonight.

You know, I don't know what God was talking about with Abraham. I can count these stars right now. One of my favorite things to do is when I get out of the city and get far away to actually, you know, late at night, to look at the sky and just to stand in awe at the stars.

The reality is that those stars are all around us right now. I just can't see it. And even now, I can't see it because there's too much light from the sun.

This awesome and powerful and mega luni, this mega God, is around us at all times. And he focuses on us.

He is mindful of us and that Jesus died for us and yet, so often, we can miss out on seeing this because there is so much pollution around us.

[13:54] Not light pollution, but busyness. Our eyes can be deceived by our own sin. But Mary's song is a reminder that God knows us.

He is mindful of us. And we need to continue to sing this song to our hearts. To actually take time to cast our eyes to God, to go out to the country as we would, to look at the stars, to actually take a moment and be in awe of God's bigness.

That God would make this universe, and we can only see a speck of it, that it would go on for infinity. But God has that much love for us.

to take a moment and think, this God of the universe, he is mindful of me. That Jesus died for me. That not only is he mighty, but he is mighty for you.

How much then should we want to magnify this God in our souls? God's grace causes Mary to want to magnify him because he has been mindful of us.

[15:05] Mary continues to sing about how great this God is, that he lifts up the lowly and not just those who are full of pride, not just the rich, not just those who are mega in their own eyes.

And we see Mary singing of the justice that God brings. This God is great. He isn't biased. He treats the lowly and humble with love and grace.

He lifts them up. And now Mary sings of what God does with those who see themselves as great. Verse 51. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm.

He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty.

God scatters those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. Pride competes with God for glory. It's a competition for who is going to be the greatest.

[16:04] Pride in our hearts refuses to acknowledge that God is sovereign. And especially when our eyes are clouded with the light pollution of busyness and sin to see God as great, pride fills us up.

And when we are full of pride, our lives look different. Mary is singing comparing what is going on in her heart. She is making God the greatest in her soul and spirit, whereas the pride of others is filling up their hearts.

The hidden places magnify themselves. We all battle it. We all can have an inflated sense of what we deserve. I think about Christmas.

I've had a number of conversations with people in my own family, with friends, about expectations of what Christmas Day will look like. Which family do we go and see?

What do we do on Christmas Day? When do we do presents? Who's making the food? Who's making the roast? Who's bringing this? And it is just a time that is fraught with pride and comparison.

[17:14] I have this expectation. I have to do this. It has to look like this or Christmas will not be great. It can be a time of pride where we think I am the greatest and it has to look like this.

But God hates pride. He has lifted up Mary. She knew her humble place before God and yet God scatters the proud. It's an act of judgment.

God did it when mankind got ahead of themselves and built themselves up quite literally into the tower of Babel. Full of pride they thought they could ascend to heaven and yet God scattered them.

When Israel was full of pride and thought that Jerusalem would never fall and they continued to sin against him God scattered Israel. God brings down those who are wise in their own eyes.

He sends away those who are rich. the call of Christmas is our desperate need for God to save us. And he had to directly intervene in that situation.

[18:21] God had to take off his Godhood his divinity and become a person to limit himself to become a humble man. And if we attempt to make ourselves greater than him we'll have no part in his salvation.

The powerful and wealthy are inclined to pride so God sends them away empty. We continue to see this in the world today how world leaders and government officials indulge in luxury.

They give grants to each other and money. They swell with pride and can be intoxicated with the spoils of their prosperity. And Mary sings that God brings down those rulers from their thrones but she also calls us to see that God is the greatest that he should be the one that is magnified.

It can seem like the world runs on riches and people's money but Mary reminds us that God is actually sovereign. God is actually in control over all of these.

The great and rich and powerful face the temptation to lift themselves up to praise themselves before God but this is not just for those on thrones and those who are mega rich.

[19:35] Mary's call is for us to be hyper aware to be on guard that we don't chase these things to. Mary's hymn is a song of the powerless and not the proud.

It's a song not of expectations but God's unexpected grace. In this whole song God is the one who is the subject of all the verbs.

God is the one who does the actions. God is the one who acts. Just have a look with me. Flick through it with me. God is the saviour. God is mindful of his servants.

God is the mighty one who does great things. God is the one who extends mercy. God is the one who performs mighty deeds. God brings down rulers.

God lifts up the humble. God fills the hungry. God sends away the rich. God is the one who helps his servant. God is the one who acts. God is the one who acts.

[20:35] God is the one who acts. God is the one who acts. All religions in the world are about what we do but the story of Christmas reminds us that it is about what God has done.

It's not about what we do whether I have to be meditating to give up worldly attachments, act in the right way to please God or continue to go to temple or church, follow the right cultic practices, to be the sinner who has to go from low to high, from sinner to saint.

Mary's song flips all that. Flips the cultural expectations, the social expectations. God is the one who acts. He sees our needs and he starts a revolution that reorders reality.

The highest of highs the great and mighty God intercedes for the lowest of low, this young woman and calls her blessed. God ignores those on thrones, those who are rich and important and he is mindful of the humble and lowly.

