

We need Joy

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[0 : 0 0] is spent per person at Christmas time. It's \$1,600 is spent on each person at Christmas time. That figure shocked me. It seems really large. Although if you're part of my family, that figure's fine. It's an incredible amount of money. And I wonder if we're spending a lot of money at Christmas time because we have a lot of insecurities. I wonder if the cost of Christmas reveals our insecurities. We're worried about what people will think, and so we respond by spending money to try and change people's perceptions. Easy to think, I have to be known as the generous uncle, so I've got to buy the best present. I need my children to love me, so I'm going to buy them everything they've asked for for Christmas. I haven't spent much time with my wife this year, so I'll spend a lot of money on her instead. Maybe in my family, they don't love or appreciate me, so I'm doing

Christmas lunch with all the trimmings. There is more food than you can poke a stick at. I wonder if Christmas reveals our insecurities, this feeling of being loved and appreciated.

If my husband buys me the right gift, then he knows that he's actually been listening for the last six months when I've been dropping hints all along the way. Don't worry, Alyssa, I think I've heard all of those hints. At least we'll find out on Christmas morning.

Is it possible that we do the same thing with God? That we are striving to get God's love and acceptance. But instead of trying to buy gifts for God, we do things out of a feeling of insecurity. Today, the good news of the Bible is that God has a wonderful present for us. One that destroys this feeling of insecurity and anxiety before God. And we see it in the song that Mary sang. We got a hint of it before with our kids. We saw the very start of it in the song that Mary sang. But we're going to have a look at this song a little bit more now. Now, Mary, she wasn't in the highest position. [2 : 2 1] She was not a queen or a princess. She wasn't a rich influencer mom with a million followers on Instagram. She was a young, soon-to-be-married girl from a backwater town called Nazareth.

She was a no-one. And yet God chose her to be the mother of Jesus. And we've seen how Mary and Elizabeth responded out of joy to what God has done. So let me read Mary's song again. It's in Luke chapter 2, and it's from verse 46. It says, My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed. God has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. What a wonderful reversal of the order of humanity.

Usually, we are only aware and care about those who are rich or who we can gain something from. But here, God is aware and he cares for the lowest in society.

Mary keeps singing from verse 49, For the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm. He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. The mighty one, God, does great to the lowest.

He honors Mary and he lifts her up. And those who are proud and arrogant, he pushes them away. He scatters them. And he has brought down rulers from their thrones, but he has lifted up the humble. God has totally flipped the way that we usually operate. In a world where the rich seem to get richer and no one seems to hold them accountable, God knows the acts of all people. And he says he will lift up the low and keep those in high position accountable. At Christmas, we can be tempted to think that we need to be impressing people with the best gifts, the best parties, the best lunch, hoping that when we do, we will get their love and acceptance. And it would be terrible for us if we operated in the same way with God. But the good news of Christmas is that we can sing this song of Mary's with joy just like she did, because God has been mindful of us. God is mindful of you. We don't need an angel like

[5 : 16] Gabriel to speak to us. We don't need to get pregnant in an immaculate conception to know that God is mindful of us. God shows he is mindful of us through Jesus, this baby who was born, who lived a life obeying his father, who suffered on a cross, died and yet was raised three days later. Because of what Jesus has accomplished, God offers us to be his children. This is the highest position of all. This is a position of love and acceptance as his children, not because of what we have done, but because of what God has done through Jesus. This is good news for us this Christmas, because we don't need to be anxious before God. We don't need to be worried about where we stand, what does God think of me? We can be secure in Jesus. We don't need to hedge our bets, ticking off a box of doing things at Christmas, trying to secure God's love for us. God is mindful of you. He knows you and he loves you.

You don't need to work hard to get him to love you. You don't need to worry or fear. Instead, we have a God who has shown his love to us in Jesus. And so we can rejoice like Mary and sing, my soul glorifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God, my savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. This position before God is secure. It has been nailed firm to a cross.

We live in a world that has many joys that are often temporary and many insecurities and anxieties this is the best joy. This is a secure joy that takes away fear and anxiety.

I have three children. One of those is Micah, who is two. Hi, Micah. Micah likes to copy his older brother and older sister. His older brother and older sister have grown in competency at climbing. They're pretty good climbers. Micah likes to copy them and he thinks he is as good as them. The biggest thing he thinks he's good at is jumping down. The other two, they're pretty good at jumping down and landing and not dying. Micah, when he climbs, he is totally secure. He has no fear.

[7 : 49] Why? Because he knows that I'm below. And Micah will climb and he will stand on the precipice with no fear. With no fear. No fear of falling three meters away. He will jump and have no fear when he's in the air because I am at the bottom ready to catch him. And when he jumps and when he's in the air, he is full of joy. We might be living a life that feels like we are standing on the edge of a cliff.

We might even be in a position in life where we feel like we are falling and drifting and we're about to hit the ground. And this can bring so many anxieties and so many fears. But we have a God that is mindful of us. He loves us and he accepts us and he is not just standing at the bottom waiting for us to come to him. He has come to us and he has showed his love and security in the death and resurrection of his son. And so now we can have joy. Even if we feel that we're on the edge, even if we feel that we are falling, we can have joy because there is a God who has made us secure in Jesus. Let me pray.

God, I thank you so much for what you have done in Jesus. Thank you that you made promises to both Mary and Elizabeth and it brought them joy. And thank you, God, that you have been mindful of Mary and that you are mindful of us. Us who are lowly and sinful and don't deserve anything from you.

But God, we thank you that you are mindful of us and that we are secure because of Jesus. Lord, help us to have joy now because of that. Amen.