

# Mary's Magnificat

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Date: 01 December 2022

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [TrinityGraceAthens.com](http://TrinityGraceAthens.com).

! I'd like to invite you to go ahead and start turning in your Bible to Luke chapter 1. We're going to travel along for a little bit early on in Luke chapter 1, but eventually we'll settle in verses 46 to 55.

It's that time of year. Evergreens are in stock in front of every store. You notice that they put all the holiday candy kind of in those middle aisles right at eye level and hand level for all of your kids.

They're luring us in, aren't they? And of course, Christmas tunes. Every store you go into, the Christmas jams are going as far as the ear can hear.

I'm sure you probably have a favorite Christmas song. You probably have a least favorite Christmas song or three, too, if you're anything like me. What is the song you most fear to hear during the Christmas season?

[ 1 : 1 5 ] Christmas shoes. Yes, Christmas shoes. I was waiting. I knew someone was going to say that one. Maybe it's Paul McCartney's ridiculously catchy, wonderful Christmas time. It's like gum that sticks on the bottom of your shoe.

It just will never go away. You can never get out of your mind. Or maybe you cringe at the thought of Alvin singing about hula hoops and all the chipmunks and their shrill little voices. Well, for me, as one who loves drums, my all-time least favorite song is probably, you guessed it, The Little Drummer Boy.

It is, in my opinion, a terribly bland song with the added irony of being like the least fun song to play on the drums. If you're a drummer out there, you know it is not fun, is it, Charlie?

It's a terrible drummer song. Well, even though there are a handful of those kind of cringeworthy songs that we have, there are also many great Christmas songs. And for those who follow Christ, Christmas gives a chance to reflect on the story that's at the core of our very existence.

The greatest Christmas songs give us more than some syrupy, feel-good, catchy tunes with random kind of meaningless lyrics. The best Christmas songs capture the heart of the season.

[ 2 : 2 9 ] They guide us like a star to Bethlehem. They point us to the significance of Christmas in Jesus Christ. The best Christmas songs are a form of Christian worship. Christians have long been known as a people who sing.

We did it this morning for half of our service. We dedicate to singing. But why? Why do we do that? Well, Charles Spurgeon, famous pastor, once said, singing is the natural language of joy.

Do not even the ungodly sing when their corn and wine increase? Have they not their harvest hymns and vintage songs? Do they not sing right merrily when they go forth to the dance?

And if the wicked sing, thus shall the righteous be silent? Are the jubilant songs all made for the ungodly and the dirges for us?

No. If they have joy, much more have we. Many of the songs and other sounds of earth never penetrate beyond the clouds.

[ 3 : 36 ] I love that line. When warriors win victories, they shall. Have we no victories through Jesus Christ, our Lord? And when men celebrate their festivals, they sing.

Are there any festivals equal to ours, our Paschal Supper, our passage of the Red Sea, our jubilee, our expectation of the coronation of our King, our hymn of victory over all the hosts of hell?

Oh, surely if the children of earth sing, the children of heaven ought to sing far more often, far more loudly, far more harmoniously than they do.

Come then, let us sing because we are glad in the Lord. Wow. He has a way with words, doesn't he? Well, the greatest Christmas songs do so much more than just kind of give us the warm fuzzies and a little dose of nostalgia for the season.

They go into the darkest places and help us recognize our sin-sick state. They're honest about our violence, about our restlessness, our bondage, our fears.

[ 4 : 44 ] They look at the hopelessness of our condition and they declare that we cannot save ourselves. We need a Savior.

Great Christmas songs point us to great news indeed. The God who made us did not abandon us in the fallout of our sin. Quite the opposite.

That our God came to us to do something about our sin. Christmas centers on the arrival of Jesus Christ. Emmanuel, meaning God with us.

It is good news of great joy and great joy bursts forth in song. God rest ye merry gentlemen. Let nothing you dismay.

Remember Christ our what? Savior was born on Christmas Day. Why did he come? To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.

[ 5 : 43 ] Oh, tidings of comfort and joy. Come thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free.

From our fears and sins release us. Let us find our rest in thee. Joy to the world.

The what? The Lord is come. Let earth receive her king. You see, the greatest Christmas songs allow us to glory in the greatest story of God coming to save his people.

So over the next four weeks, we are going to meditate on the first four Christmas songs ever sung. All four are found in Luke's gospel and are sometimes called the nativity hymns.

We'll hear from Mary, Zechariah, the angels, and Simeon as they burst into their songs. What God has done in Jesus Christ demands to be praised.

[ 6 : 51 ] Now, Spurgeon said, The song of the Christian cannot be satisfied to stay on the earth. But our words must go higher and higher into heaven. And the reason our joy-filled words must go up to heaven in praise is precisely because the word, Jesus Christ, first left heaven and came to earth.

So this morning, we will turn our eyes and our ears to the first Christmas carol. To give us some context about what's already happened up to this point, verse 5, chapter 1, verse 5 lets us know that we are in the days of Herod, king of Judea.

You know the Roman Empire at this time has dominion over vast parts of the known world. And the Jews have been absorbed into that Roman Empire.

The golden age for the Jews has seemingly come and gone for these people. They are, in a sense, in captivity within their land under the rule of Rome.

They've not heard from God in hundreds of years. They've been silently waiting and probably wondering if God will ever rescue them.

[ 8 : 06 ] Will he send the Messiah to set all things right? Or has God forgotten his promises to his people?

That's where they're at. Well, Zechariah has a hard time believing some news that he's given. This man, Zechariah, one of the priests, has a wife named Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. And they're noted as righteous before God. But they are childless because Elizabeth is barren and they are both old. The hope for a child seems obsolete.

That is, until an angel, if you remember the story, he appears to Zechariah and he promises that they will have a son named John. John will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

And in verse 17, it says, he will make ready for the Lord a people prepared. Interesting language. Well, as you can imagine, Zechariah really does have a hard time believing this.

[ 9 : 11 ] And because he has a hard time believing the words of the Lord, he is struck with silence until the time of John's birth. Then, true to the promise, Elizabeth miraculously conceives.

It's not long after the angel Gabriel appears to Elizabeth's cousin. A young girl engaged to be married, named Mary. The interaction can be seen in verses 30 to 35, if you look there with me.

It says, 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.

Well, after this interaction, Mary goes to visit her older, now miraculously pregnant cousin, Elizabeth.

[ 10 : 43 ] Verses 41 to 45 capture this exchange. It says, When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, The baby inside of Elizabeth 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. All of this is the prelude.

John Piper helpfully notes at this point, That Mary sees clearly a most remarkable thing about God. He is about to change the course of all human history.

[ 11 : 46 ] The most important three decades in all of time are about to begin. And where is God occupying himself with two obscure, humble women?

One old and barren, Elizabeth. One young and a virgin, Mary. And Mary is so moved by this vision of God, the lover of the lowly, that she breaks out into song, a song that has come to be known as the Magnificat.

So now let's lean in and listen to Mary's Magnificat, the first Christmas carol, starting in verse 46.

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.

[ 13 : 01 ] 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 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.

However, this is the word of God. May he bless the preaching and hearing of his word. I think that the main point for us this morning is simply this.

Humbly rejoice in our magnificent and merciful Savior. Humbly rejoice in our magnificent and merciful Savior. We'll break this into two points.

[ 14 : 07 ] Rejoice in what he's done for you. Rejoice in what he's done for us. Rejoice in what he's done for us.

Rejoice in what he's done for us. You'll notice right away, as we're looking at this text, that Mary is personally gripped by the goodness of God. Look at it. My soul, my soul magnifies.

My spirit rejoices. All generations will call me blessed. He has done great things for me. The praise is intensely personal.

But Mary is not the person being praised. The Lord is the object of her praise. Mary begins with this, what we would call parallelism. It's a common device in Hebrew poetry.

It says first, my soul magnifies the Lord. And then she says, my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. They are parallel lines that capture the same concept from slightly different angles to amplify the idea.

[ 15 : 12 ] So what does she mean when she says, my soul magnifies the Lord? Well, this song is often called Mary's Magnificat for this very reason. Magnificat comes from the Latin translation of the word that means magnifies.

The verb magnifies means to make great, to praise, to extol. And it parallels the idea of rejoicing in verse 47.

Luke uses the same root in Acts when the apostles are filled with the Holy Spirit and they begin speaking of God's works in all of these different languages. Luke uses the adjective in this case, magnificent or mighty works of God.

Look at Acts 2.11. We hear them telling in our own tongues the, here it is, mighty works of God. That's the same root word. So to magnify carries this idea of lifting up and bringing out specific parts and then rejoicing.

It's kind of like looking back on a picture. I know that we have a few different picture books on our coffee table at home and one of us is of our wedding day. And sometimes we'll sit and we'll study the pictures and each face, each picture brings back some specific memories from that day.

[ 16 : 31 ] Each shot evokes kind of a particular angle of the joy that we experienced on that day. So studying these pictures more closely allows us to magnify, to bring out aspects that accentuate our joy.

In fact, when we take time to meditate on those pictures one after the other, we're able to see something of this composite joy. All these pieces coming together, this composite joy in a way that we couldn't necessarily see it when we were in it.

So Mary here is thinking about her life. And she is astounded by the mounting goodness of the Lord that has led to this moment.

And then it results in praise. But how does a soul magnify the Lord? I mean, a mouth might verbalize praise to God, but we all know that there can be empty praise, right?

We can sing the songs and move our mouths and words can come out. But it might not be felt and believed. When Mary says that her soul magnifies the Lord, I think that she's pointing out that her innermost being is feeling in that moment the greatness and the holiness and the mercy of God.

[ 18 : 02 ] And it's being expressed in praise. This is a picture of what it means to love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul.

This is it. This is it. Notice that she isn't trying to just conjure up some kind of feeling of love. Like, I know I've got to love him. I've got to try harder and make it happen. She's digging deep within.

Rather, she is responding to what God has already done for her. Not only does she magnify the Lord, she rejoices that God is her Savior.

She's like a kettle on top of the stovetop. My grandma had one of these sit there when she'd make tea. God's actions toward her have so warmed her soul that she cannot help but boil over in joy.

And it comes out. This is such wonderful news for us. Because we are commanded over and over again to glorify God.

[ 19 : 06 ] We are commanded to magnify him. Well, this command would be a terrible burden if we were being asked to just conjure up the feelings and pretend to be happy.

But instead, the only way to fulfill this command is to relax and to be happy in the mercy God has shown.

What a relief. This is what magnifies God the most. Do you want your soul to magnify the Lord? Lord, we are to follow Mary's lead here.

She meditated on God's character and his actions. Not just generally, but specifically for her. God's not just a Savior.

God is her Savior. When you see the character of God in Scripture, I would suggest maybe it would serve you to pause and ask how you've seen this character trait of God in relation to your life.

[ 20 : 21 ] God is patient. How have you seen his patience in your life? Where have you seen God's faithfulness in your life?

How has he spared you? Where has he blessed you? Well, Mary continues to give reasons for her praise.

Take a look at verse 48 with me. For he's looked on the humble estate of his servant. What becomes increasingly clear as we go through Mary's song is the fact that she has been immersed in Scripture.

The words she uses to describe her situation very closely mirror, if you remember this, the prayer of praise of Hannah in the Old Testament. If you remember Hannah, she was barren and desperately desired to have a child.

And rather than become bitter at the Lord, she continued to trust him. And in 1 Samuel, she refers to herself as the Lord's servant.

[ 21 : 31 ] That's her title. Hannah, the servant of the Lord. She did. She found favor in the sight of God, and he miraculously provided a child for her. And here, Mary applies the same language, the similar language to her situation as the servant of the Lord who is receiving a miracle child.

So throughout the song, Mary either quotes or alludes to books such as Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, and many others.

All embedded in this one song. So it is obvious Mary is steeped in the Word of God. She's like a sponge that has been soaking up the Bible over the course of her whole life.

So much so that when she's squeezed by the pressures of life, Bible comes out. She can't help but think in these biblical categories. She can't help but speak in the terms of the stories that have given her life and hope again and again.

May the same be said of us. Trinity Grace Church, as Paul said to Timothy, all scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that we may be complete, equipped for every good work.

[ 22 : 53 ] It's a transformative treasure. It's a transformative treasure. And it points you to the God who loves you and is committed to you. So in fact, even this very song, the song of Mary, is given to us, to you, for the very purpose of building up your faith this morning.

The author of this gospel, Luke, opens with these words to the reader. If you flip back, Luke 1, verses 3 to 4, it says this, It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, this reader, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Oh, this book is not a bunch of disjointed fairy tales with some moral antidotes tacked on to the end.

It's an invitation from the God who made you to know him and to live in response to his goodness all the days of your life. So let's give ourselves to studying and rejoicing in this word.

Not only will soaking up the scripture give us right categories for understanding God, it also helps us to rightly understand ourselves in relation to God. Just look at how Mary expresses it in verse 48.

[ 24 : 24 ] He has looked on the humble estate of who? His servant. His servant. She appropriately recognizes her position before God as his servant.

She exists because a creator created her. She had no power to bring herself into this world. She rightly understands the limitations of her power, and she rightly understands that it is appropriate to submit to the one who has the power to create and to sustain her life.

Servant is a good word that helps capture her identity in relation to the Lord. Servant implies that there is a master. All of her life is seen as an expression of this relationship.

A servant eager to do the will of the master. Is this the identity that most clearly defines your relationship with God?

Is it obvious to your coworkers that God is your king? Does your spouse know that your aim in life is to serve the Lord?

[ 25 : 41 ] If you've never thought in those terms before, let me invite you to continue listening to Mary's song. Notice that she not only refers to herself as a servant, but she acknowledges that God has looked upon her humble estate.

She takes an honest look at her position in the eyes of the world. She knows she has nothing in her own right to boast of that would merit the kindness of God.

In other words, this servant knew that her master could do something where she could do nothing. This dependence on God is a display of humility.

Humility. Humility. So on the flip side, to not live in dependence on God is the opposite of humility. It's pride.

C.J. Mahaney helpfully wrote that pride takes innumerable forms but has only one end. Self-glorification.

[ 26 : 51 ] That's the motive and ultimate purpose of pride. To rob God of legitimate glory and to pursue self-glorification, contending for supremacy with Him.

The proud person seeks to glorify himself and not God, thereby attempting in effect to deprive God of something only he is worthy to receive.

Pride is self-centered and self-seeking. To use language of the business world, pride is self-employed.

Pride does not believe in the need to answer to anyone. Pride believes all of life's good things are earned and all of life's ills are undeserved.

Pride is a glory stealer. Since pride is self-employed, pride can never be called a servant. Only humility can embrace the title servant.

[ 27 : 56 ] Where pride can only see what they believe the world owes them, humility recognizes that their receivings far outnumber their deservings. So which best describes your relation to God?

Self-employed or servant? Let me urge you to humble yourself before God. A well-known passage from James 4, 6 says, God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Humility before God is the predecessor to praise. Where pride creates glory stealers, humility creates glory givers.

So Mary is rejoicing because she rightly understands that she is God's servant and he has given her grace upon grace. The one who is humble has no problem looking outward in thankfulness.

In fact, that's exactly what we see in verse 48 when she says, from now on all generations will call me blessed. In light of her admitted unworthiness, she knows future generations will recognize this special blessing from God.

[ 29 : 14 ] Blessed implies that she's received something that she did not earn, right? In spite of her low social status, she knows that God has blessed her and it leads to personally rejoicing in God's personal kindness towards her.

Verse 49 says, For he who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name. This really tripped me up.

I was trying to figure out why would Luke, in this capturing of the song, why would he capture the connection of the personal act of kindness with God's holiness?

Seems like he just kind of threw that in there. Like Mary just blurts this extra piece out. Holy is his name. Well, holy means to be set apart. For God's name to be holy means that all God has done is unique to him.

There is no other God who has acted or displayed his character. And in particular, Mary is using language that captures God's unique holiness as deliverer.

[ 30 : 20 ] The deliverer. A few weeks ago, we studied Psalm 111, which celebrates in part God's work to save his people from slavery in Egypt. And there is this line in here.

His unique holiness as deliverer is directly connected with his name in verse 9. He sent redemption to his people. This is his rescuing act.

He has commanded his covenant forever. And then it tags this on. Holy and awesome is his name. There it is. He's a rescuing God because he's holy.

So Mary recognizes the gift of this child is not only a personal kindness, but a gift given for the good of all God's people.

Mary lifts us up from her personal story at this point to see God's holy work of redemption unfolding in the world. So let's take a look at point two.

- [ 31 : 19 ] Rejoice in what he's done for us. Look at verse 50 with me. Verse 50 says, His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

So God's work is not bound to one person at one point in time. It is for all those who fear him for generations and generations.

So this transition in Mary's song moves from the individual to the community. It's moving us to the broader audience. The following verses are kind of like an expansion of Mary's personal joy about the divine acts that apply to her.

She's now expanding it to a broader audience. These acts represent God's posture towards all of his people. And they are acts animated by mercy.

You see it there? The word translated as mercy in the New Testament is the word used for God's loyal, gracious, faithful, covenant love for his people in the Old Testament.

- [ 32 : 32 ] It's the same word that they're translating over as mercy in the New Testament. Psalm 103 captures his mercy towards those who fear him when it says this, The Lord, Yahweh, is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always chide nor really keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards who?

Those who fear him. It's the same language. Same language. Such gracious faithfulness characterizes God's dealings with those who acknowledge him.

Fearing God includes anyone. Who acknowledges God's position and authority. Those who see the most of God are those who acknowledge him.

But it's also true to say that where God gives grace to the humble, he opposes the proud. God has to be consistent with his character here. To be truly good, God has to oppose evil.

- [ 33 : 48 ] He has to hate evil. Or else he's not good anymore. If he proves evil, he's no longer good. For him to love what brings life, he has to hate what brings death.

So we see in the next several verses that for God to show mercy to his people, he must act to rescue them from everyone and everything that threatens to destroy them.

verse 51 says, he has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. So God is going to oppose the proud and give grace to the humble here.

He'll take down the self-employed and lift up the servant. So this show of strength is on behalf of those who fear him. This defines the very contrast that we see in verses 52 and in 53.

we're going to see a contrast between poor and mighty and then the hungry and the rich. These lines of contrast aren't just about social status and possessions.

- [ 34 : 55 ] We have the temptation to start to look at it those ways. God does not automatically side with the impoverished and oppose those who've had a meal. That's not how God operates.

That's not what this is talking about. Underlying these points of contrast are those who fear God and those who trust in themselves. That's what he's getting at here.



The question is one of who is open and responsive to God and who is not. Often the social circumstances though of the powerful make them independent and sensitive to God while the poor often, not always, but often are more dependent on God because they know what it means to be needy.

So we have to be careful to avoid two errors when we look at texts like this, specifically verses 52 and 53 when they start talking about poverty, wealth, power.

There's two errors that we can fall into. First, we must not just spiritualize everything. Spiritualize the material references to the point that we remain shielded from any conviction about excessive attachment to riches.

[ 36 : 16 ] That's not helpful for our souls. Wealth tends to be characterized by an independence from God and self-reliance. We must be willing to look at our possessions and even more important, the ambitions behind the pursuit of wealth to see if there's anything, anything, numbing us to our need for and dependence upon God.

So that's error one. Don't over spiritualize everything. But the second error we also have to watch out for is de-spiritualizing them and turning them into political manifestos or calls to social action.

There's poor people, don't you know? All you rich people should be ashamed of yourselves. That's not what it's saying either. We have to be careful not to detach these from their covenant connection.

These are embedded in the story for a reason. To do so, to extract them from that and just say it's social action, it empties the text of their main purpose which is to show our need to turn to God.

That is the main purpose. So having this in mind, those two errors, having this in mind helps us to rightly understand what Mary's saying here. Verse 52 says, he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate.

[ 37 : 42 ] So here's another reference to humble. Second time we've seen it here. Humble. These are the ones who are certain of their need for deliverance. This is a consistent theme in the Old Testament.

God gives grace to the humble and opposes the proud. Look again at verse 53. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty.

See the contrast there? The one who is hungry is often more likely to feel his desperation and need spiritually. There's this posture of dependence.

Psalms 107 9 helps us understand it's not just a physical dependence. It says, he satisfies the longing soul and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

You see it? So these are all things that God does for his people. For those who fear him. This is reiterated in verse 54.

[ 38 : 52 ] Oh, he has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy. But isn't there something weird in this?

I was reading this. This caught my attention. There is something very odd in all of this. Because all of the actions, if you look at the verbs, all the actions mentioned in verses 51 to 54 are referred to in the past.

Past tense. Something that has happened. Well, this is weird because this song is not simply about what God has done in the past. This song is a celebration in response to the baby that's in Mary's womb.

So what's going on? What's more, if you look at this, all of the acts are in connection to promises made in verse 55 to Abraham's offspring forever.

This is a song about the Messiah, the coming one. Not the one who came, but the coming one. This is a song about the long awaited Savior. Mary sings about his action as if it were a past event.

[ 40 : 09 ] But why does she do that? She sings this way because these actions are so sure to come to pass, they are spoken of as if they have already happened.

You know, situations like that, it's good as done. It's so sure it's as good as done. The promises are so sure they are as good as completed.

That's how faithful the Lord is. Looking into the future, talking as if it's the past, the Messiah is coming, he's going to get things done. I want you to take another look at verse 54.

54. Because maybe you came in this morning and you heard how happy Mary was and you thought, well, good for her. I don't feel that way. I'm glad she's got a happy peppy song and she's jingling along, but I don't feel that way.

I don't have a song to sing. Take a look at verse 54 with me one more time. He has helped who?

[ 41 : 22 ] His servant. This is the second time servant has come up in our text. The first time Mary refers to herself as God's servant.

However, this reference is to a group of people as God's servant. The identity applies more broadly to those who fear God. Even though God's people are referred to as a servant, let me ask you this.

Who is serving who here? He has helped his servant in remembrance of his mercy.

The master is serving the servant. In case you have felt distant from God or you feel as though he is cold towards you, please, please lean in and see God's heart with clarity this morning.

He is not a cruel master standing far off with his arms just crossed waiting for you to mess up. On the contrary, because you have messed up, he opened up his arms in mercy and hung on a cross for you.

[ 42 : 44 ] All other religions urge you to see what you can do for God, but Christianity invites you to see what God has already done for you. This king has come to serve the servants.

Mark 10, 45, a wonderful passage, expresses the very mission of the son of God. For even the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

So in the words of the famous carol, we must ask, what child is this? As verse 52 says, God has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate.

the Messiah would share this humble estate. Being born in a forgotten town to poor, insignificant parents and placed in a food trough used by animals, this child born in the humblest of circumstances would certainly be exalted.

But another way to describe exaltation is to be lifted up. Most often, this is a reference to being lifted up in honor. To be exalted is to be lifted up.

[ 44 : 06 ] Indeed, the coming Messiah would be lifted up. Some 700 years before God placed this baby in Mary's womb, the prophet Isaiah wrote these words about the Messiah, the servant of the Lord.

These are Isaiah's words. Behold, my servant shall act wisely. Servant, he shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted.

As many were astonished at you, his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and his form beyond that of the children of mankind, so shall he sprinkle many nations.

Kings, those that are on their thrones, shall shut their mouths because of him. For that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

behold, this baby is the Messiah. He is the servant of the Lord. He would be high and lifted up.

[ 45 : 13 ] He would be exalted, but the way to being high and lifted up was by emptying himself and becoming a servant, living perfectly the life that we failed to live.

He was high and lifted up on a Roman cross. the suffering servant was suspended between heaven and earth while the full wrath of God for our sin was poured out upon him.

But why did he do this? Why was he born only to die for sinners? Verse 53 points out that he went to the cross in order to fill the hungry with good things.

Jesus said of himself, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Christ came to satisfy the hungry soul. He came as a servant to give his life as a ransom for many to whoever would humbly admit their need.

[ 46 : 28 ] Jesus Christ offers himself to you. So the question for you this morning is are you numbered among his people? Are you self-employed or are you a servant of the living God?

In order to be a servant you don't have to do anything but receive the life of God's servant?

To receive it. I invite you this morning to turn from your sin and to trust in Jesus Christ. Author and pastor David Mathis once commented on Mary's song saying this is emphatically not a personal journal entry but a song designed for the people of God in all places for generations to come and it is not just deeply insightful about what God was doing at the first Christmas but it is a penetrating summary of the whole Bible.

He chooses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. He chooses what is weak in the world to shame the strong. He chooses what is low and despised in the world even things that are not like a forgotten town called Nazareth and an unwed maiden carrying a child conceived without a human father to bring to nothing things that are.

He humbles the strong and magnifies his strength by exalting the weak. Christmas turns the world upside down and I would argue he turns it right side up.

[ 48 : 14 ] So let all the servants of God join Mary's song let us humbly rejoice this morning and forevermore in our magnificent and merciful savior.

Let's pray. Oh Lord you are good to your people and you came for us when we could not save ourselves.

We celebrate this morning with song with life a savior a savior is born one who came to free us from our sin and so Lord we humbly bow our hearts before you and ask that you help us to see you rightly let our souls magnify you today and we join Mary's song in praise of our magnificent savior in Jesus name amen you've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us