

Advent Week 3

Mary's Song

Mary has just received the news from the Angel of the Lord that she will conceive and give birth to a son and she will call Him Jesus. Luke 1:31. Fast forward to **Luke 1:46 – 56**. **'and Mary said, My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour for 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; 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. 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. He has helped His servant Israel remembering to be merciful. And to Abraham and his descendants forever just as He promised our ancestors. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about 3 months and then returned home.**

The passage is known as the MAGNIFICAT and it is a song of Praise to the Lord. A song of Praise and Thanksgiving for what God has done for Mary, and the people of Israel. All the way through the Bible we can see people giving Praise to God for what He has done for them. If we look through the Psalms, the Psalms are a great example of people praising God, in particular King David, singing songs of praise. That, maybe, the reason Mary felt able to do the same because she knew scripture. Mary felt compelled to lift her voice in Praise and Worship to the Most High God, her Lord. This passage comes in three part, the first being, **'WHAT GOD DID FOR MARY'**

As we look at this passage, we can see that Mary makes reference to the Old Testament scripture. Luke 1:50 **'His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation.** v51 **'He has performed many mighty deeds with his arm, He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.** v55 **'to Abraham and his decedents forever just as He promised our ancestors.** Mary hid God's word in her heart, she wanted to magnify God and not herself. She wanted to give thanks for all that God has done and what He is going to do.

Last week, if you remember, we talked about the importance of prayer and giving thanks to God for all that He has done for us, well Mary was doing the exact same thing. So, what has God done for Mary? Well first, it is important to mention that Mary was a sinner just like us. Luke 1:47-48 **'and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant, from now on all generations will call me blessed.** At that time Mary was nothing special, except the fact that she was carrying Baby Jesus of course.

Other than that, she was a young girl aged about 13, 14, 15yrs old, trying to make her way in the world. I bet she did not think this was going to happen to her when she woke up that morning? Her only defence was to trust in her Lord. I wonder what people would say today if they heard that a girl of that age was pregnant? Probably the same as they did then. **BUT GOD SAVED HER.** Just like us, Mary was saved by Grace because she Knew God and trusted Him as Lord and Saviour. In the original text, Mary says 6 times what God has done. He has been **Mindful**, His **Mercy** extends, He has performed **mighty deeds**, He has brought down **rulers**, He has filled the **hungry** and He has **helped** His servant Israel. Mary knows that God will fight for her. v49 **'For the mighty one has done great things for me; Holy is His name'**. The reference **Holy is His Name**, not only refers to God's name, but it also refers to His character, **HE IS A HOLY GOD**, and Mary knew this.

2) What God has done for us.

This part of Mary's Song includes all of God's people who fear Him. From Generation to generation, we have all experienced God's love, help, guidance and mercy. Mary names 3 specific groups in this passage, the **HELPLESS v51**, the **HUMBLE v52**, and the **HUNGRY v53**. The issues that were around in Mary's day were, that common people struggled with the injustice and Civil rights. The people were very often discouraged and downtrodden, and it was exceedingly difficult to fight the system. Sound familiar???

Lk 4 16-19 **'He (Jesus) went to Nazareth where He had been brought up and on the Sabbath day, He went to the synagogue as was his custom. He stood up to read as the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. Unrolling it, He found the place where it is written, 'the Spirit of the Lord is on Me because He has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the POOR, He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recover sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.** Mary saw the Lord turning things upside down; the **weak**, de-throne the mighty, the **humble**, scatter the proud, the **nobodies** are exalted, the **hungry** are filled, and the **rich** end up poor.

3) What God did for Israel.

Despite Israel's destitute condition Israel was, and still is, God's chosen nation. They are still God's servant and God was, and is, going to help Israel fulfil His purpose. He (God) shall save His people from their sins, He would remember His mercy, and keep His promises; as we can read in Ps 98:1-3 **'Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvellous things. His right hand and Holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made His salvation known and revealed His righteousness to the nations. He has remembered His love and His faithfulness to Israel, all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.** There are also verses in Genes is 12:1-3, 17:19, 22:18, 26:4, and 28:14.

As Mary prepared to leave her cousin Elizabeth to return home, she showed signs of her pregnancy. What would happen when people saw her?? How would Joseph react?? What would the neighbours say??

Israel was God's chosen people and now the arrival of the Saviour was imminent. God was preparing a nation through the obedience of a young girl, through Mary, the saviour of the world was about to be born.

This plan, a thousand years in the making is nearing its climax. Baby Jesus is about to join the rest of humanity, God was about to rescue the WORLD!

So where does that leave us today? Does it leave us with, yeah, yeah great story Mike, but we have heard it before, same old, same old.

Or are we challenged, how God works through ordinary people, through Mary, through You and me. If God can work through Mary, then He can work through any of us if we choose to let Him. What would have happened if Mary said NO? 'Sorry God, but I am not sure about this. The gift of carrying your Son into the world is not my cuppa tea'.

Has God asked you to do anything? He calls us all to pray, He calls us all to share the Good News. So why is the national church in decline?

We have sung and we will sing, familiar Carols and songs. We have heard very familiar scripture, and today may have been for you, a familiar day.

But today if God wants to use you will you let Him? Will you put yourself in a place where you can be used for God? Or is this just another Sunday where you feel deflated, brow beaten by the News, by Brexit and the pandemic, and all the uncertainty of what will happen. Mary was a young Lady barely in her teens, carrying the Lord Jesus Christ, and we think we have got problems?? We as Church need to get real and start to stand up for what we believe and proclaim the Gospel, which literally means **GOOD NEWS**. We have the power and the authority to change people's lives if we keep in step with the Holy Spirit, He will guide us if we allow Him. And there is the challenge for us today. Will we allow the Holy Spirit to move in His Church and help bring this nation to a place of true tolerance?

Blessings

Mike