

Mary's Song

Luke 1:46-55



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FOCAL Read Responsively Luke 1:46-55 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, {47} **And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.** {48} For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. {49} **For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.** {50} **And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.** {51} He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. {52} He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. {53} **He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.**

Aren't Mary's words in this text so much like a song? Though it may have been a prayer I believe it was the song of her heart expressed in such a way that God Himself was blessed. Mary rejoiced, singing “**my soul magnifies¹ the Lord**”. This is in the present tense. Mary had received great mercy from the Lord so she praised Him and glorified Him. God was going to use her to bring Himself into the world, but God was not using Mary because she was equal to Him or even because she was flawless.

Mary said “**my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior**”. Mary had to be saved just as we all must be saved. She had to believe on the Lord and on His

1 Present Active Indicative of G3170, *μεγαλύνω*, megalunō, *meg-al-oo'-no*, From G3173; to *make* (or *declare*) *great*, that is, *increase* or (figuratively) *extol*: - enlarge, magnify, shew great.

promise.

Mary had relationship with God built on trust in Him and in His abilities to save – not on her goodness. God was her Savior. Mary would do nothing to take glory from God. Though she was – as her cousin Elizabeth exclaimed - **“blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of her womb” (Luke 1:42)** Mary would not begin to speak of how worthy she thought she was. She wanted to magnify God, to praise His holy Name. God had taken her, the **lowly handmaiden of the Lord (Luke 1:38)**, and used her to do the greatest thing mortal woman has ever done. The Lord took Mary – a person saved by faith according to her own testimony – and used her in a miraculous way. **The Word – Jesus – was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14)**. God the Son, the **living Bread which came down from Heaven (John 6:51)** fulfilled the promise and prophecy of God:

Isaiah 7:14 ... the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

God would come and dwell among us. God would **take upon Himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man. He would humble Himself, being obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.**

(Philippians 2:7-8).

What is the Scripture about? If I were to take the whole of the Bible and distill it down into just a few words, what words would I use?

What *one word* would I use to describe all of the Scripture? Relationship.

God wants to have an ongoing and eternal relationship with you. He wants this so much that He was willing to come to this earth, taking upon Himself humanity. He was willing to leave the splendor of Heaven and the glorious Throne around which glowing angels sang **”Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory”(Isaiah 6:3)**. He was willing to put all of this aside and come to a place where He would be discounted, discredited, and disrespected. He Who sat enthroned in yonder glory would take upon Himself a lesser frame, and seat Himself upon an manger, having nothing to look forward to in this life but a brutal and shameful death.

Jesus would be born of a lowly virgin in a lowly place, live a lowly life, and die a lowly death hanging between two thieves. Yet

John 1:12-13... as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Though we delight in seeing the children gather around the Christmas tree to open gifts, the greatest gift of all will not be found *under* the tree but *on* the Tree. Jesus Christ **bare our sins in His own Body on the Tree** of Calvary. The greatest act of love in all of human history began to unfold the day that God used Mary to bring Himself into His Creation to save us. God did what He did because He wants an ongoing and eternal relationship with you and with me.

Will you not give yourselves wholly to Him this Christmas? May God lead you to make the right decision so that you, along with Mary, can say “my soul doth magnify the Lord”.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

1. God Desires An Ongoing and Eternal Relationship With You

FOCAL Luke 1:46-55 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, {47} And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. {48} For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

God desires an ongoing and eternal relationship with you *on His own terms*.

Mary said “**my soul doth magnify (or declare Him great) the Lord**”. The source of Mary's relationship to

God was not that she was perfect or sinless – for she was not. The Scripture tell us that Mary prayed to “**God my Savior**”. If she were perfect and holy apart from God then God would not have had to save her.

If Mary were without flaw then she would not have spoken of the “**low estate of God's handmaiden**”.

The word translated “**low estate**”² is actually used several other places in Scripture. The same word is translated **vile** in:

Philippians 3:20-21 For our {citizenship} is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: {21} Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Our bodies are indeed **vile**, the products of corruption. Mary said “**God has regarded the vileness – the imperfections of His handmaiden**”. She recognized that God because of His great love saved her, and now would use her to be an instrument through whom God would save others. Not Mary herself, but “**the Holy Thing which would be born through her would be the Son of God**”.

Mary did nothing to warrant being the vessel through whom Christ would come. She was not sinless – in either

2 G5014, ταπεινῶσις, tapeinōsis, *tap-i'-no-sis*, From G5013; *depression* (in rank or feeling): - humiliation, be made low, low estate, vile.

her mind or in the mind of God. She was, by her own admission, *in need of the Savior*. She was, by her own admission, *vile*.

Mary may have been a good woman who loved the Lord, but her strength was in recognizing weakness.

As the Apostle Paul said in another place:

2 Corinthians 12:10 ... when I am weak, then am I strong.

Mary's praises unto God were all about God and what He had done for and to her. So it is with every Christian who has ever been saved. Our relationship with God is not based on our own inherent goodness – for we have none. The Scripture rightly says:

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

God wants a relationship with us, pursues a relationship with us, and yet – many times – we spurn that relationship because we think we have a better way.

Mary was not saved by her own well doing. She was not inherently *immaculate* or without sin, else the Scripture is wrong when it states:

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of

the glory of God;

All means all. Truly the Scripture testifies:

Romans 3:10-12 As it is written³, There is none righteous, no, not one: {11} There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. {12} They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

The Apostle quotes from **Psalm 14:1-3** and **Psalm 53:1-3** when he talks of the righteousness of man. Paul literally states “**It is written so that it stands forever written 'there is none righteous, no, not one'** “. None are inherently righteous. Not you, not me, not even Mary. We must come to God to be saved. God desires a relationship with us, but we can only enter that relationship by faith in Him and His means. We can only enter that relationship by faith in Jesus Christ.

If it is true that when I am strong then I am weak, it is also equally true that when I am weak then I am strong.

When God looked at mankind following the Worldwide Flood He said:

Genesis 8:21 ... I will not again curse the ground any

³ Kenneth Wuest states: "It is written" is *gegraptai*, in the perfect tense, literally, "It has been written, with the present result that it is on record." Paul is quoting from the Old Testament. He uses the perfect tense to show the permanency of the record, as David says, "Forever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in heaven."

more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

This statement of fact from our Creator came long before the Mosaic Law was given on Mount Sinai through Moses. God said **“the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth”**. Listen Beloved, have you ever had to teach your children to lie, to be angry, to be self centered, brutal or a bully? They – and we – are born with a heart problem. You can clamp your hands over your ears but the cancer is still there. You can close yourselves off to the solution and still die in your sins. You must come to Jesus!

Here's the chief problem of humanity: we have a heart problem. We need God to change our hearts. We need Jesus.

The great preacher **W.A. Criswell**⁴ said:

“They say, “If we have tractors to move mountains, we don't need faith. If we have penicillin, we don't need prayer. If we have positive thinking, we don't need salvation. If we have the state, we don't need the church. If we have manuals of on science, we don't need the Bible. And if we have an Edison or an Einstein, we don't need Jesus.” They define terms and they define life altogether in secular and material nomenclature. But [the] gospel of the Son of God addresses itself to a far deeper need of humanity than

4 In his sermon *The Blood of the Cross*, Hebrews 9:22-28

penicillin or government or manuals of science could ever heal. The Christian faith addresses itself to the need for regeneration—for the forgiveness of sins; for a new life, a new heart; a new way, a new day.”

God wants a relationship with us, but many cling to the idea that they can enter this relationship on their own terms. We cannot enter Heaven on the wings of our own righteousness. That prince of preachers **C.H. Spurgeon** said:

“Such wonderful people would appear ... to have flown up to the gates of Heaven upon the wings of their own virtues, and to have entered without passport of mercy ... I wonder how they would behave themselves in Heaven, if they were really admitted there! All the rest are singing “We have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”⁵ but these needed no washing, and so they would likely strike up a little song by themselves, and sing, “Our robes never needed washing, we kept them white as snow”. What a discord that would create ..”

Dear friend, if you want to have a relationship with the Almighty you must have it on His terms. Mary, the handmaiden of the Lord, was not her own Savior, and neither can you be. You cannot get to Heaven by keeping the Law, for like a crystal vase you have already shattered it into a million pieces. What is our hope? Is it the hope that the Pharisee standing in the Temple had who bragged:

5 Revelation 7:14

Luke 18:11-12 “... God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. {12} I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Illustrate Look at the leper and see how terrible sin is. God often uses leprosy in the Bible to describe the terror of sin. Take a leper, decaying and suffering, and wrap him in fine white linen. Stand back and look at your good work – look how you have changed him! Yet in but a few moments the decay underneath begins to show through the cloth. Your good works cannot cover up sin. You need Jesus. You need Him Who left the glory of Heaven to come to this earth, wrapped in swaddling clothes, laying in a manger. You need Jesus! Like the Publican who standing far away would not even look up to Heaven, you need to say to Him:

Luke 18:13 ... God be merciful to me a sinner.

Illustrate My hope is surely to rest in Jesus – nothing more and nothing less. To rest in Him and trust in Him is the greatest of all things. Like the father with the spirit that cast him into the fire, so often our wicked heart leads us astray of the Great Shepherd. “**Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Turn us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned. (Mark 9:24; Psalm 51:10; Lamentations 5:21).** If Mary's hope – and your Pastor's hope – is nothing more than Jesus, should not this your hope, too?

Oh Beloved, turn to a deeper relationship with God in Christ. Do not lean on your own wisdom, your own experience, or your own knowledge. As another Mary would do later in Christ's ministry, sit trembling at His feet. Learn of Him as a little child would learn. Trust what He has said, and turn to Him for sustenance.

God wants an ongoing and eternal relationship with you, but you must trust in Him and His Word. **God became a little Child in a humble place to save you. You must become as a little child to be a friend of God.** As Jesus said:

Matthew 18:3-4 ... Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. {4} Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Look unto Him, all who will, and be ye saved!

2. God Wants To Give Your Life Greater Meaning But You Must Be Available

FOCAL Luke 1:46-48 **And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, {47} And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. {48} For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.**

Who was this “Mary” before she met the Lord?

She was nothing, no one to any one. She was unknown to Herod, to Pilate, to Caesar, to anyone of power and wealth. Even today we know little of Mary the mother of the humanity of Christ. She was *nondescript*, and yet her name is known by billions. Some have even gone so far as to worship Mary – an excess and a foolishness according to Scripture – but we can learn much of Mary.

Look at the *pronouns* used in her heart's song. **MY soul doth magnify the Lord, MY spirit hath rejoiced in God MY Savior.**

Mary was not only saved, but she *was possessed of God*. Her focus was Christ and serving Him.

He desired to use her to bring His humanity into the world and – rather than debate with God or point the finger at another – she said YES LORD to Him.

May I say that God uses those who make themselves available to Him.

God used *fishermen* – lowly and coarse men – to begin His Church. God used *redeemed prostitutes* to save His Israel as she entered the Promised Land, and a *redeemed sinner named Mary Magdalene* sat at His feet and learned while Pharisaical *Doctors of Theology* busted hell wide open.

From the day that God first saved Mary her focus was to magnify Him. God uses the available. If you will do as

Jesus said and:

Matthew 22:37 ... love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

then you will grow in your relationship with Him. Seek Him in private prayer. Seek Him through study of His Word. Seek Him through meditation of His Scripture. Ask Him “what would You have me to do, O Lord?”, and then do as He bids. Make yourself available to Him.

ILLUSTRATE Make yourself available to God even when what He asks doesn't make sense. **Like Peter's boat filled with fish, sink in your own esteem as God blesses you.** Be like the Baptist who said “**He must increase but I must decrease**” (John 3:30). The river called Pride has drowned more Christians than any other body of water. Put your pride away and do as God bids you to do. The **root of false theology is found in putting my desires above God's Will.** When Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his only son Isaac that dear old man could have debated with God. Instead he went forward trusting Jesus, telling his son “**God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering**” (Genesis 22:8). Abraham believed God – not just at the point of salvation, but in his daily walk. He believed God was able and moved forward as God directed – and was richly blessed. God uses the available.

Mary's greatness came from her willingness to *let God be God*.

When I am weak, then am I strong, the Apostle said.
Paul said:

2 Corinthians 12:9 ... Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

God uses the available. Mary did not spend her time trying to figure out *how* God was going to do what He was going to do. She just replied:

Luke 1:38 ... Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. ...

Dear believers, say with Mary:

**Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.⁶**

and let God be God. If you have trusted in Jesus for salvation this is not the end of your road, but the beginning. You were blind, but He has made you see. You were dead, but He made you live. You were imprisoned in sin, but Jesus broke the walls of the great jail down. Rejoice in Him, as Mary rejoiced.

FOCAL Luke 1:46-48 And Mary said, My soul doth

⁶ Words: Adelaide A. Pollard, 1907. Pollard believed the Lord wanted her in Africa as a missionary, but she was unable to raise funds to go. In an uncertain state of mind, she attended a prayer meeting, where she heard an elderly woman pray, "It's all right, Lord. It doesn't matter what You bring into our lives, just have Your own way with us." At home that night, much encouraged, she wrote this hymn.

magnify the Lord, {47} And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

Let Christ be the center of your relationship with God. Cling to Him. A mangy dog will bite the hand of the one who feeds him, yet you are no longer dogs. Let your lives be a constant song unto Jesus.

Mary sang "**my spirit rejoices in God my Savior**". God did great things for Mary, for you, and for I at the point of salvation, but He is not finished with us yet. We should sing:

Psalms 68:19-20 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. {20} He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.

The God Who saved us is the God Who gave us eternal life – and who gives us a better life now. Cling to Him.

Cling to Jesus, the Vine, and learn of Him. Grow in your knowledge of the Lord and you shall do much. He has said:

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

abide in Christ. Here is where hope lies.

3. God Wants You To Share His Loving Message With Others

Life is a gift from God. Eternal life is a gift from God. Share the gift of eternal life so that others can *begin living*.

The season we call “Christmas” is a time of great depression for many people – even for young people. Share the love of God with them. Tell them what Jesus has done for them. Give them hope for tomorrow beyond the Christmas Tree, beyond the Yule Log, beyond the overeating. Point them to the Eternal God Who wants to bless them – if they would but surrender to Him.

Mary shared her message with others. As she spoke to her cousin Elizabeth everything she spoke of pointed to the Lord. Not once did she point to herself as the source of her – or Elizabeth's – blessing. It is all of God. Look once more at Mary's Song:

FOCAL Luke 1:49 For **he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.**

Here is the center of the Christian message – everything we are and hope to be has come from the Almighty hand of God. There are many in the world today who *hijack the message of the Gospel*. They say either “You must get your life right before coming to God” or else “God saves a person while he wallows in his sin”. Yet Mary's song rightly said “**holy is His Name**”. Our God is a Holy

God – and we are not. Our hope and faith is in the truth that **Christ came to save sinners of whom I am chief.**

FOCAL Luke 1:50 And **his mercy is on them that fear him** from generation to generation.

If a person has no **fear of God** then he shall *never swim in the sea of God's Mercy*.

When we were stationed in England there were many motels that had private beach fronts. You had to purchase a room in the hotel before you could enter the ocean where their sand was. What does God require of those who wish His mercy? **A healthy fear of God.** God is God and we are not. He is immense, we are small. Come unto Him, cry unto Him, and He will give you rest. **His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation.** God, our infinite God, has been saving people for thousands of years. He will save you, too, if you will but come to Him. Has He not promised “**I am the LORD, I change not**” (Malachi 3:6)? Doesn't the Scripture say “**Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever**” (Hebrews 13:8)? When all else melts in fervent heat the mercy of God endureth forever.

FOCAL Luke 1:51 He hath showed strength with his arm; **he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.**

Oh foolish pride that will not bend the knee to Him!

A child can pluck a harp's string if he would but put out his finger and do so. Salvation requires no more than a child's faith touching the string of God's mercy.

God **scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts**, but delights in saving those who call upon His Name.

FOCAL Luke 1:52 He hath **put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.**

Salvation is none of me and all of Christ. Try as you might you cannot build a tower to reach Heaven. The fools of Babel thought to reach God by their good works, but ended up confused and stuttering in various tongues.

FOCAL Luke 1:53 He hath **filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.**

What does God require of you, dear friend? **Come hungry.** Our God is **King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16)**. He did not come to save the righteous, nor did He come to hire earthly kings and princes to fill job openings in Heaven. Jesus Christ came to this earth and was born of a Virgin, clothed in flesh, so that He could fulfill the promise of God to our forefathers. **He came that we might have life more abundantly (John 10:10).**

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