

Good evening and welcome

IF you're new here tonight, we read through the word in a verse by verse teaching to allow God's Word to speak to us. We study through the New Testament on Sundays and We usually study the Old Testament on Wednesdays, but we'll continue through the Gospel of Luke until Pastor Gary comes home from Israel.

If you've got a bible with you, We'll start by opening our bibles to Luke chapter 1, right were we left off from Sunday's message

If you do not have a bible with you, you can grab one from the back of the sanctuary

And if you do not have a bible at home, please feel free to take it home with you.

We'll be picking up there at verse 46 in Luke chapter 1.

But before we start our reading for tonight, I think it's worth reviewing what we've gone through so far.

We've learned about the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary, who was chosen to bear the Savior of the world.

And as Pastor Josh covered, Mary was very young

- Unmarried
- Had a strong probability of losing Joseph, her soon to be husband.
- Lose all her reputation
- or even be in danger of being stoned to death with an accusation of adultery.

I find it can be easy to glaze over these details as we read of the events leading up to Jesus' birth.

God's **calling** on Mary's life was heavy, even though it was directly spoken to her by an angel sent by God.

On Sunday, we read through verses 39-45 where Mary made haste to go to visit her relative Elizabeth.

Elizabeth when greeted by Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit and she confirms God's calling on Mary's life.

Elizabeth identifies that the baby in her womb was our Lord, and said this in verse 45:

Luke 1:45. "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

See sometimes you know God is calling you to something, to do something, but still may be unsure, or doubt.

And to **not know for certain** is to be human. There are countless times in my life where I just didn't know for sure, but God has confirmed it faithfully.

These confirmations help our minds and bolster our faith.

Just a few weeks ago in the children's ministry, we went over the life of Gideon as he took his first few steps of faith to fulfill the calling God set on his life.

Good thing he didn't need any confirmations, right?

NO we see probably the greatest example of a man needing confirmation.

Gideon is the poster child for "God, I believe what you're saying, but I'm spiraling right now."

We see time and time again where God has confirmed His calling on someone through something or someone.

And for Mary, God confirmed His plan through Elizabeth.

Tonight, we'll pick up in verse 46 with the byproduct, the **response** of Mary when hearing what Elizabeth said through Holy Spirit's filling.

Elizabeth's Spirit-filled confirmation lit a match in Mary's heart, and Mary responds with worship to God.

Let's **pray** before we read tonight's verses.

Lets read on in verse 46 —> (46-55)

46. And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord,
47. And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48.
For He has regarded the lowly state of His
maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations
will call me blessed. 49. For He who is mighty has
done great things for me, And holy is His name. 50.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him From
generation to generation. 51. He has shown strength
with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts. 52. He has put down the
mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. 53.
He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich
He has sent away empty. 54. He has helped His
servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, As 55. He

spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever.”

The beginning of Mary’s praise to God is really important.

She doesn’t start with theology, or the history of God’s people, or even father Abraham as she mentions later in her song

She starts her praise with a very personal message.

Lets look at verse 46 again:

46: “**And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord”**”

She starts her song by stating her SOUL magnifies the Lord.

She states that her song comes from her soul, or her very being.

She's responding to the confirmation she received from Elizabeth with a very **deep and personal** cry to the Lord.

We see a similar statement in Psalm 34:3:

3: "Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together."

That's what we see Mary doing here. She's responding to the situation by **exalting** the Lord simply for who He is.

I find this portion very powerful. We see Mary's FIRST reaction is to bring God glory. To magnify Him.

I don't know about you, but there have been situations, whether good or bad, where my reaction, my response, didn't bring God glory.

My very **soul** didn't thank Him, or magnify Him.

It has been 11 years since I was hospitalized from a freak accident where I had cracked my skull and my brain began to bleed.

It was January of 2015 and I stood up from the couch so fast that I had actually blacked out and slammed the back of my head on the tile flooring.

None of my family witnessed the event and the fall caused a brain bleed that went undiagnosed for a couple of weeks.

I would spend that time on the family couch with the worst pain in my head, followed up with constant and ceaseless nausea.

My parents were diligent to figure out what had happened to their son, and after a while we learned it to be called a subdural hematoma.

And the individual who pieced that puzzle together was just a nurse. She was a believer, and I believe she heard from the Holy Spirit as she had no other clues to work with.

The doctors later informed us that patients with this injury have a higher mortality rate, and those who remain undiagnosed for an extended period can be fatal.

I vividly remember praying to God for Him to get me out of that situation.. and I'd repeat that prayer over and over again as the pain grew worse.

And the pain clouded my thoughts and I was bed ridden, or couch ridden, for the length of time before I was even diagnosed.

There were times where it was hard to even think at all. But I prayed and prayed, and I was ok with leaving this earth if that was His will for me.

But after 1 helicopter ride, 1 ambulance ride, and a fun open brain surgery, He did deliver me out of the situation.

But my *first* response to the conclusion of that chapter was **not** what we see Mary doing here.

You'd think that I'd see an obvious answer to prayer and give Him the glory.

It took me a lot longer than it should have to give Him the glory and praise He deserves.

And my head injury stands as a stone of remembrance for me to always remember what He's brought me out of...

And I know Mary's situation is greatly different, but the same principle applies to us all:

Are we looking to magnify, or exalt the Lord in our lives?

I know life can be bleak at times. So much so that it's impossible to see ahead.. but how do you think Mary felt here?

She still had the same road ahead of her. Just because she's rejoicing doesn't mean she's blind to what's ahead.

She will still need to answer to her fiancé when her stomach starts to show. She'll need to stand the ridicule and potential harm from those around her, and I don't believe she was naive to what was to come.

She's simply worshipping God for **what He's done** and **who He is**.

Real, genuine worship gets the focus off of you and places it on God.

And I find it so amazing to see that Mary **isn't** magnifying herself here

She easily could think to herself, “I must be special”
“God chose me to carry the Savior of the world”

We see the opposite.. Lets move on to verse 47:
47: “**And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.**”
She calls God here “my Savior.”

Which means something very simple: Mary **knows** she needed saving.

Mary is not claiming she’s sinless or a higher elevation than others, she simply see’s herself as every other person - needing a rescuer, a kinsman redeemer, a savior.

Romans 3:21-24 reads:

21. “**But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22. even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23. for all have**

sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24. being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”

Mary is someone we should look up to in scripture. While we don't believe she's without sin as some streams of Christianity believe, she is an important figure in Gods Word, and this verse shares her heart in that she also needed God to be her savior.

God did choose her to carry the Savior of the World and to care for Him in His youth, and that's remarkably special.

And what a mind blowing concept it must have been for her to be the only person to do what she did.

For her to look at her own belly and to think that the innocent, unborn baby will one day be the One to set us free from sin.

I personally love what she says next in verse 48:

48. “For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.”

Mary notes her own status when before the Holy God and calls herself a “maidservant”, or simply servant or even slave.

And this brings us to a major theme in the word:

God Sees the Lowly

And It’s one of my favorite themes throughout the scriptures.

God chooses the nobodies throughout time to bring forth His will.

We see this same example with King David. He was the youngest brother and wasn’t even invited to meet Samuel.

God chose Gideon, and as I spoke before, he wasn't the bravest or strongest man God could have used.

Gideon even stated that he was of the weakest clan, and the weakest man in his fathers house. Yet GOD chose him to fight the Midianiles.

Jesus Himself even chose many men who were "less desirable", with fishermen, a zealot, and even a hated tax collector

1 Corinthians 1:26-27 reads:

26. "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty"

It's one of my favorite themes of the nature of God.

To know that He isn't searching the earth for the very best to further His kingdom.

He's not running auditions for the greatest leader who can manage thousands and keep tally on everything.

He's not running a gameshow titled, "Who's the next Samson?" To find someone strong enough to fight His battles.

And he's certainly not scouring the Ivy League of colleges to find the brightest minds to combat the false doctrines and heresies that come up through the generations.

We can see a picture of God's heart in Psalm 113:5-8:

5. "Who is like the LORD our God, Who dwells on high, Who humbles Himself to behold The things that are in the heavens and in the earth? He raises the poor out of the dust, And lifts the needy out of the ash heap, That He may seat him with princes— With the princes

of His people. He grants the barren woman a home,
Like a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD!”

And this is greatly comforting to me.

Because that means God sees us all. The God of the universe, the One who set all into motion and created the heavens and the earth, sees us.

He doesn't just see kings, but all of humanity.

And that includes Mary here in our text tonight. She isn't qualified, or of nobility.

She's not powerful or a dignified individual within the social structure.

She's simply humble, and available for what God has for her.

And this major theme throughout God's Word is great news for us today

Because it's real.

Most of us aren't famous, or wealthy, or influential
Many of us may even be in some pretty dark places in
our lives.

Just trying to survive the week.

But Mary's song here reminds us that God sees us
where we're at.

He sees the tired mom that's handling the kids and
working a job to make ends meet.

God sees the quiet kid that may not have friends and
deals with some dark thoughts.

God sees the man who works a job that's overlooked
and overworked.

And the amazing thing about God is that if you feel
you're not important, or not good enough, God loves
to use people like that.

So I want to encourage you to seek what God has called you to for your life.

Because God sees both your current weakness, **and** what He plans to do through you.

In Mary's case, Elizabeth confirmed God's calling for Mary's life:

To be the one to carry Jesus, who would grow up to be the perfect Lamb, and to provide a way for us to spend eternity with God.

YET Mary still sees herself as a servant. She stays humble, but the end of verse 48 **can** sound as if she's not humble.

The end of verse 48 reads, "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

To some, this can seem as if her ego was inflated, but in reality she's simply grateful.

And she's not saying this out of **ignorance**, thinking that all will be easy and people will start bowing down to her.

...but out of **confidence** of how great God is and how He's faithful to do what He says He'll do.

Let's continue through her praise to God in verse 49: (49-50)

49. "For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. 50. And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation."

We read of a shift in her tone from "What God did for me" to "Who God has always been"

In the first few verses, everything was personal.

She had used words like

My soul
My spirit
My savior
He regarded me

But we see the tone change to celebrate who God is.

Continuing the theme of this being **genuine worship** from Mary, she doesn't point inward towards herself, but upwards to God and His nature.

This confirmation she's just received from Elizabeth has brought her a better understanding of God's character - who God really is.

She acknowledges God's immense power, holiness, and mercy, yet remains astounded by the incredible things He has done for her.

She knew that God hadn't just picked her randomly. She knew it wasn't just coincidence.

He didn't just simply cover his eyes and point down towards the first young lady He could find.

She understands now that He chose her because that's simply who God is.

She first starts with "He who is mighty"...

Meaning powerful, strong, able to accomplish what He wills to do.

What God was willing to do wasn't a small thing. It needed to be this way as to fulfill centuries of prophecy.

Only a all powerful, mighty God could fulfill the prophecies written about the coming Messiah

Jesus needed to be
Born of a virgin
Born in Bethlehem

From the lineage of King David
And, consequently, In the line of Abraham

There are many examples of God's power throughout
His word, but Jeremiah 32:17 exalts him in this:

Jeremiah 32 Verse 17 reads:

“Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the
heavens and the earth by Your great power and
outstretched arm. **There is nothing too hard for You.**”

Mary understands that the God working in her life is
the same God who made the universe..

IF God can create the stars, well, he can certainly
handle her future.

And I believe our worship to Him grows when we
remember how powerful God really is.

She then moves on to state “Holy is His name”

This speaks to God's purity and perfection.

God is:

- completely set apart
- completely righteous
- completely without sin

In the book of Isaiah, and when Isaiah is called to be a prophet of the Lord, we read this in chapter 6:

“1. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3. And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” 4. And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5. So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips,

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”

Isaiah when seeing this scene, quickly rushes to say that he is undone.

In the language of the children’s ministry, Isaiah would have said, “ I am **cooked**”

And I’ll sometimes hear people say, “When I get to heaven, I’ll give God an earful.”

“I’ll tell him what I **really** think”

No you won’t.

Every example of man even coming to see just the **manifestation of the glory of God** in scripture has:

- fallen face down
- find themselves in utter fear, terror, or Awe
- literally freeze up and feel weakness

And some have burst out in worship and praise.

Because - **Holiness** exposes our **unworthiness**

And if you really think about it, that should terrify us sinners.

A **perfectly holy God** and sinful people do not naturally mix.

But Mary adds one more truth to her song:

Verse 50: “And His mercy is on those who fear Him”

For us, that word changes everything.

Mercy means that God does not treat us or deal with us as **our sins deserve**.

Psalm 103:10 says:

“He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor punished us according to our iniquities.”

And isn't that something?

God **IS** mighty

And God **IS** holy

But He is also merciful.

He is compassionate toward the humble..

For those who fear Him.

And for Mary, she realized something profound.

The God who is powerful and just enough to **judge** her

Is **merciful** enough to **save** her...

That's why she's not afraid, but rejoices as she sings
this praise.

and I think we can all agree to that tonight.

We serve a wonderful, merciful God who longs to have a real relationship with us.

And we do not deserve that...

Lets read verse 50 again,

“His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.”

Mary is thinking beyond her own life and circumstances. She knows God’s mercy is not just temporary.

Tonight, we can pull a lot from her praise to God.

Her worship to God is **based on who God is**.

And I thought of something as I was studying this portion:

Would we worship Him the same if God was **missing** one of the three attributes she mentioned?

It'd be harder to worship God if he wasn't all powerful.
It'd certainly be harder to worship God if he wasn't perfectly holy.

And I know it would be harder to worship Him if he wasn't merciful.

We worship a God who embodies all those attributes and much more, and it is **crucial** that we hold Him in our hearts with the utmost reverence.

Her worship to God is not based on **emotion** or **feelings**.

There are churches today that try to create worship by creating an atmosphere — dim lights, emotional music, the right mood — almost as if emotion itself is the goal. But in Scripture, worship isn't produced by an environment. It's produced by truth.

... but I have asked Pastor Josh if we can install some fog machines and maybe some laser lights...

But notice how Mary didn't need a band, stage, or the right atmosphere to worship. She simply worshiped Him for who He is.

Church, we should aim to mirror this.

Life is full of mountain highs and valley lows. Sometimes you're straight up in the trenches or the gutters of life.

You may be in a season where things are looking up and bright, or maybe you can't even see how you'll make it out of the situation you're in

But ask yourself:

“Am I worshipping God for how I feel now, or am I worshipping God for who He is and will always be?”

Read with me on in verses 51-53:

“51. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. 53. He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty.”

Mary shifts her praise once again from:

“Who God is” to “How God works in the world”

Look again at verse 51

“51. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.”

We see the theme of “His arm” or you may have seen “with an outstretched arm” when reading the Old Testament.

And this is language to describe God's power in action.

So when we read through that verse we see the theme of God's arm coming against the proud.

And scripture is very consistent with this:

God opposes pride. We read in James 4:6

“...“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

God doesn't just dislike pride, but he resists pride.

We see that common theme throughout His word - that he actively stands against self-sufficiency.

Because pride means, “I don't need Him.”

And to be frank, if we don't need Him, well, we don't need His grace either.

So Mary simply states that God scatters the proud. He
-frustrates their plans

-breaks their self confidence

If we look at verse 52 again, it reads:

“He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and
exalted the lowly.”

This is how kingdom of God works.

But we **all know** the world tells us to

-Climb higher

-Gain more power

-Get more money

-Make a name for ourselves

And we **ALL** still operate in the worlds ways from time
to time, if we're being honest...

We even see the disciples of Jesus arguing over who's
better **on the night in which Jesus was arrested**
there in the upper room.

Think about it! The disciples were blessed enough to see with their eyes Jesus walking the earth and perform mind blowing miracles.

This group of guys were able to spend day in and day out with our Lord. They ate breakfast with Him, talked with Him daily, and yet they still didn't grasp the way of God's Kingdom.

We can see that interaction in Luke 22:24-26:

“24. Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.

And again, this verse said it was a dispute. An argument of who's better! Lets keep reading:

25. And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ 26. But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.”

...But we're bound to mess up...

If those who lived with Jesus did it, we will too from time to time

But the takeaway is this:

We know what God thinks about this. He's given us His word to guide us through what we should do.

We just read what Jesus Himself had to say about it, but in short:

Humble yourself

Serve Him

Trust Him

As this verse states, He lifts the lowly.

And as we read earlier, God sees you. You don't need to claw your way up.

Choose His way.

Let's look at verse 53:

“He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich
He has sent away empty.”

This verse is not only about money, it goes deeper than that.

The hungry in general are those who know they **need** something.

The rich are those who think they already have everything.

Jesus repeats this theme later in Matthew 5:6:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.”

As Mary emphasizes in her praise:

The world's ways run opposite to God's Kingdom.

In God's Kingdom:
The proud fall
The humble rise
The self sufficient go away empty
And the needy get filled.

And that's the beauty of the Gospel message.

Nobody should come to Jesus saying, "I've got everything together, but I still want salvation"

We say, "I need your mercy, your grace. Forgive me Lord."

And what about those of us who have been following Jesus for some time. Those of us who have a living relationship with God?

Well this passage brings us a hard question:

When we spend time in our daily devotion, or time praying to Him, are we coming to Him proud? Or humbly?

Are we approaching our time with Him as if we have it all together, or as if we need His help?

And being completely honest: There are countless times where I am broken, or worried, or confused to where I go or what to do, but at the same time, I don't bring it to Him humbly.

Being real, There have been many times where I'll think of Him last. I'll have exhausted everything else, and as a last ditch effort, almost treat the Almighty God as a google search engine to fix my problems.

Simply inputting what the issue is to see if I'll get something out.

And that mentality was hard for me to overcome earlier in life.

We should come to Him, pray with humility and not to fool ourselves to think we don't really need His help.

When we come to God full of ourselves, we leave empty

But when we come to Him empty, He fills us to overflowing.

Now Mary ends her song of praise by stepping back and she looks at the entire story of Israel

Look at verse 54:

“He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy”

Mary starts to praise Him for God's continued redemptive story He started long before she was born.

Israel was set apart to be God's people

But they wandered

Disobeyed

And consequently struggled for generations

But the word “helped” in this verse gives the idea of supporting, or coming to someones aid.

God didn’t abandon the Israelite people, even in the height of their rebellion.

And I don’t know about you, but for me its hard to read through the book of Judges, or the events that occur after the rein of King David.

You read through the Old Testament and at times you see Israel, God’s people, mess up again and again and again.

And my first reaction is always, “But wouldn’t they know better? Wouldn’t they know to continue to follow God’s lead and receive the blessings He promises them?”

But it hit me a few years back when I saw the parallel between the Israelite people, and us as individuals.

Israel's story in the Old Testament isn't just history, it's kinda like a mirror.

There's a constant cycle of Rescue, devotion, drift, rebellion, consequences, repentance... and it repeats

And I know in my own life, I've seen this cycle play out again and again.

Because we're prone to wander..

And as we see in verse 54, we read again:

“He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy”

God did not forget His messy, inconsistent people.

And God will not abandon you today. If you are not currently walking with God, or your starting to drift away:

Don't let it get to the point where you're completely broken, or worse.

Turn back to Him now and let Him renew you

Our lives and our faithfulness can be unstable, but His mercy is not.

Let's read on in verse 55:

“As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.”

She takes the ending of her praise back to Abraham.

She's connected her pregnancy to a promise God made centuries ago.

I'm sure she must have heard of the Hebrew stories of the coming Messiah

She knows now that God's plan and promises are being fulfilled with the calling He's placed on her life.

And this displays a steady ground for our faith.

Because life is too unstable, unpredictable

Mary's life was not going to be smooth sailing till it was her time to go. But we see her rejoicing in this moment simply for who God is.

God keeps His promises, **every single time**

If He kept His word with Abraham
And kept His word to Israel
And fulfilled His word with Mary

He will keep His word with you.

And this matters because there will be seasons
when you don't feel anything.

When your worship to God **feels** dry

When your prayers **feel** unanswered

But our confidence in Him **shouldn't** be built on how we feel today.

It **should** be built on who God is.

So even in seasons where you cannot see what He's doing, you can trust who He is, just as we see Mary doing here as she lifts up this praise.

So the question for us is simple:

Are we worshiping God because of our circumstances

Or because He is worthy?

Because our situations change

But God does not.

And worship that's grounded in who He is will endure long after emotions fade.

May we be a people who worship like Mary.

People whose praise flows not from the moment, but from conviction

People who know God **so well** that worship becomes the natural response of the heart.

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

We'll have people up front during this last song who would love to pray with you.

If you need prayer for anything at all, I want to encourage you to come up and bring it to the Lord.