

## “The Song of Mary” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Advent Midweek 3 December 18, 2024

- I. **Luke 1:46-56** – The Song of Mary – Previously read
- II. **Mary sings a song of praise in our reading today... but it's not original.**
  - a. As I mentioned last week, John the Baptist jumped in his mother's womb, and this gave confirmation to Mary that she was carrying the Messiah, the Savior of the world.
    - i. So Mary breaks into song – which we call the “Magnificat”, which is a Latin word that means to magnify... or glorify.
    - ii. Mary is glorifying God for this amazing blessing in her.
  - b. It's interesting though, because much of this song comes from around a thousand years earlier... as Hannah, the mother of Samuel sang a similar song.
    - i. It's hard to say why Mary decided to sing this song, when there were many others she could have chosen.
    - ii. The Magnificat points to the Christ bringing justice and giving to those who have nothing, while taking from the evil people who exploit others.
      1. The Old Testament has a lot of other songs that use these themes of justice that Mary could have used instead.
      2. For example, she could have sung the Song of Moses... which is a song of victory after the Israelites watched the Pharaoh's armies drowned in the sea.
      3. There are many psalms or words of the prophets that proclaim God's wonders and how He would tear down the mighty and lift up the lowly.
  - c. So why would Mary choose to model her song after the song of Hannah?
    - i. One reason is that both women experienced a miraculous pregnancy.
      1. One was barren and the other virgin, but both were not expecting this child to be born.
    - ii. I think the better answer is that Hannah is singing from the depths of her soul – as this experience is deeply personal and filled with gratitude for God's work.
      1. As the story goes, Peninnah (another wife to Hannah's husband) has been making fun of her for years... As cruel as it sounds, Peninnah was mocking her for not being able to have a baby.
      2. So, when Hannah sings about the rich becoming poor and the poor becoming rich... and the full going hungry and the hungry being filled... she's not just being vague...
      3. Listen to what Hannah sang: “My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord... because I rejoice in Your

salvation... Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn... The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and He exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust... to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor” (1 Sam 2:1b, 5, 7–8).

- a. Hannah is talking about her own personal enemy in her little town, and how she’s been vindicated by God’s greatness after years of conflict and harassment.
- b. Hannah is proclaiming that, yes, her God is the one who pours out mercy on entire nations, but He’s also the God who gives salvation and victory to individuals, to the unknown... to the insignificant.
- d. Have you ever noticed that people suffering like Hannah (before she became pregnant) snowballs into more trouble with people near them?
  - i. What I mean is the more we feel worthless... less than... the more we feel picked on, or that God doesn’t care... the more the people around us live up to our negative expectations.
  - ii. The people who are supposed to love us start to lose interest because we are always complaining and despairing.
  - iii. People don’t really understand our troubles, and they don’t want to be burdened by them, so they sort of keep us at arm’s length and keep their distance... almost making us feel invisible.
- e. We want to leave some kind of legacy behind... but wonder if the work we do matters all that much.
  - i. Sometimes we wonder how long it will take for people to forget about us after we’re gone.
- f. It’s not hard to transfer that same despair and hopelessness to our relationship with God...
  - i. When we look at our sins and repeatedly falling for the same old temptations... and we wonder why or how God could love us.... Why would God notice us in the big scheme of things... why would God stay faithful to us when we are so unfaithful to Him?
  - ii. We can’t keep our promise to follow Him for five minutes, so why would He remember us?
    1. We keep walking away from Him through our anger... our laziness... our greed... our lust... our trust in everything but God... So what gives us the confidence that God would come near us?

### III. **We can be confident in God’s presence because of Mary’s song.**

- a. Mary tells us through her song of praise that’s a lot like Hannah’s song: “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 He who is mighty has done great things for me... His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm... He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; He has filled the hungry with good things” (vv 46–53).

- b. Our God is not just the God of the rich and famous... or massive groups and societies... He’s also the God of women who cry every day because they are struggling with fertility issues.
  - i. He is the God of lonely people with few friends.
  - ii. He is the God of the hopeless and despairing who don’t feel like they matter to anyone... not even God Himself.
  - iii. He is the God who sent His Son to find us personally... to forgive us personally.... to save each and every one of us personally.
- c. Mary’s song is fulfilled at the cross... as Jesus completed the words His mother sang about Him long before.
  - i. God Himself did great things for you by giving up His power... being betrayed and falsely convicted... receiving the death penalty and being nailed to a cross next to criminals.
  - ii. He died forsaken by the Father so that we would never have to feel abandoned or forsaken... and by His blood we are forgiven of our sins and made worthy of eternal life.
  - iii. That’s what Mary’s song is all about – that Jesus is not just a Savior for rich people and big groups... of people who are famous... but He is the Savior of the despairing, the forgotten, and the unknown.
  - iv. We are now the offspring of Abraham by faith, in other words, we are a part of the family God has blessed forever – which means we are important... we are worthy of salvation... and our lives and accomplishments as we serve the Lord have an eternal impact.

#### IV. **Mary’s song is all about what God gave us.**

- a. The little baby growing in her womb was a beacon of light and hope that gives all of us purpose in a world that can make us feel very insignificant.
- b. When Mary and Hannah praise God, they sing songs of confidence... that in spite of our unworthiness... God will raise us up... these are our songs too.
- c. We can now sing that wherever there is despair or hopelessness, we are promised forgiveness and victory.
- d. We can sing with joy that Jesus Christ is our Savior and has raised us up by His grace and mercy.
- e. We can sing that God is great, and His love for us is so much bigger than the circumstances around us.
- f. Yes, praise God for His deliverance and blessings in our lives, because He is still lifting up the lowly... even today. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Sermon based on: "The Nativity: Songs of God and Men", series by Rev. Hans W. Fiene, Copyright © 2024 Concordia Publishing House