

## Magnificat

**Luke 1:46** And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

**1:47** And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

**1:48** For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid: For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

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

**1:50** And his mercy is unto generations and generations On them that fear him.

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

**1:52** He hath put down princes from *their thrones*, And hath exalted them of low degree.

**1:53** The hungry he hath filled with good things; And the rich he hath sent empty away.

**1:54** He hath given help to Israel his servant, That he might remember mercy

*"This song is one of the most important hymns in the history of the Christian faith. From the earliest days of the church, people have come together to sing this song of Mary, called 'The Magnificat.'" (R.C. Sproul, Before the Face of God).*

I was going to preach on hope joy peace and love, but I think I can do more justice to these themes if I preach from a Bible passage that gives us some indication what we are hoping for , rejoicing about, making peace with and loving.

The answer is God.

The question we must ask ourselves is do we have the same conviction in our souls about God as Mary does?

Can we sing with her.

### Who was Mary?

- A young helpless person of her time who had been called by God to do something few understood which brought her into unjust disrepute
- God chose her; She had no choice in the matter
- She had no person to trust but God
- She is a picture of a true believer, what Israel should have been and indeed the church

Mary became pregnant miraculously, without losing her virginity.

The virgin birth is one of the miracles without which our faith would be meaningless, it is crucial that Jesus was born this way.

Jesus is Fully Human, but without a natural desire to sin that all other humans inherit from both their parents.

Obviously many people thought she had sinned to become pregnant outside of marriage and if God had not shared his plan with her fiancé; Joseph, the marriage would have been off and no other man would have married her – such was the plight of a solo mum in ancient Israel. There was no welfare system in those days.

This song of Mary comes from the very early part of Mary's pregnancy, when she is staying with her cousin Elisabeth [presumably to conceal her pregnancy out of wedlock from those who knew her in Nazareth] It is unclear if even Joseph is aware of God's plan at this stage but finally someone believes her. Elisabeth believes Mary and blesses her. This encouragement at this vital moment must have been overwhelming. Can you imagine being Mary; Until now perhaps no other human had treated her kindly since she found out she was pregnant, now she knew she wasn't crazy this was really happening and God was doing it. Her response reflects her joy. Elisabeth a real tangible person I know has confirmed what the angel said, it was not just an hallucination. **GOD IS REAL**

Mary's song comes straight out of the scripture of the Old Testament because that is how she [and all other faithful Israelites] knew God

Mary believed in a Holy God with absolute power; a God of justice and mercy

Mary believed in the God of the scriptures

Mary believed God can do anything – including make a virgin pregnant

Question: do you actually believe in the virgin birth? Do you believe in Miracles? Do you believe the impossible is possible with God?

Don't let what society, science or statistics say convince you that miracles don't happen?

They are not possible without God - THAT IS WHAT MAKES THEM MIRACLES –

Many Christians live their lives as if there is no such thing as the supernatural.

I often hear people say stupid things like; “first world people are not so aware of the spiritual world as third world people”

My reply is “If you read the bible and believe it you will have an excellent awareness of the spiritual world” whatever culture you come from.”

1<sup>st</sup> world people often don't see that they need God so they ignore the bible and talk about spiritualities with no reference to God or gods.

The thrust of the sermon today is; if you trust Gods total control over everything and believe in his ability to do miracles and change the direction of people's lives you have faith like Mary

But if you think it is all just nice stories and good ideas and God does not perform miracles then you are unlikely to trust God with your life honestly and you certainly will doubt God's ability to change you from within.

### Life of Mary

- Humble person with humble nature
- [prized by God]
- Found favour with God and God made sure she had a husband [Joseph] to take care of her
- Mother of Jesus [a bitter blessing]
- During Jesus ministry she lost her faith
- [Her love for her child blinded her to the truth]
- Prior to Jesus death she seems to remember the promises of God
- She is at the foot of the cross when Jesus dies
- Mary did not have an easy life
- Mary knew the psalms and old testament stories
- It is clear she draws on them for inspiration in the text
- Hannah's Song also gets a strong mention
- The Holy Spirit Works with the scriptures we know so it is so important to commit ourselves to reading the Bible.

### About Text

MAIN emphasis is that God is so Holy that his very Name is Holy.

He is love and he is justice and he is jealous and he is provider he is the truth and he is the way and he is life itself but above all these names he is Holy, Holy, Holy. All the other attributes of God flow out of his Holiness.

Our purpose as humans is to bear witness to his holiness and glorify him and enjoy him forever

Q. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

**A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. [Westminster shorter catechism]**

LORD, God and Saviour mean the same thing the song then explains the saving nature of God and the type of people he saves and the type of people he judges.

Soul and spirit mean the same thing in this context: my life, my breath, the part of me that I call my personality or more than this; my self-awareness.

Magnify and rejoice in mean the same thing in this context:

Please note the song starts with the Place of God and then moves onto the place of man. Mary begins by given God the Glory

Jesus teaches us to pray the same way; in fact all of our ministry endeavour should begin with God being praised.

Christian mission is done primarily to bring the glory to God. If we begin with human needs then we are simply humanitarian.

Because humanitarian organisations and Christian organisation often have the same Goals they can work together to help people in this world.

But the church must not fall into the trap of compromising the Gospel truth about human wickedness and our spiritual poverty before God. Often we are tempted to soften the message to make God more appealing to those we are trying to help.

But our job is not to put people first it is to put the glory of God first. This is done by helping people - for sure, but we must not pretend that people are not sinful.

If they are not sinful they do not need the gospel and we all need the gospel therefore we can surmise that we are all sinful.

If you don't like the idea that all humans are in need of transformation of character and motive, by God, then you are not capable of Christian ministry and the result will be that very few people will come to living faith because of your work.

*1:50 And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.*

- How many times have you heard it said- "it doesn't matter how I live God loves me"
- How much God loves you is irrelevant if you are not receiving mercy from him
- Mercy is guaranteed to those who revere God and live for his Glory...

If you say it doesn't matter what I do, I know God loves me; you are a fool [biblically speaking]. This was the attitude of ancient Israel that caused God to banish her. Truthfully knowing God loves you is displayed in your obedience to God. Jesus says if you love me you will keep my commandments.

There is a Doctrine of "the perseverance of the saints"

It teaches that the sign of salvation is the response of living a life that gives glory to God.

People who are genuinely chosen by God can't help but follow him.

In the same way that a pregnant woman cannot help to eventually give birth to a baby.

*1:5 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;*

- Judgment is guaranteed for those who live for themselves, putting their desires before God
- Our hearts are easily led astray to believe what we want is ok- when God says it is not
- It does not pay to put your clever thinking, theology or even your education before God

*Proverbs 3:5-7*

*Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

*Pro 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

*Pro 3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*

If you have an idea or thought or feeling that is contrary to what you know the bible teaches

You are being wise in your own eyes, but not in the eyes of God

If you have not read the bible or spend more time reading modern day theories on matters of faith

You are being wise in your own eyes

In the heart of every man is the potential to be a faithful servant or a fool

*1:52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;*

- God can change the seemingly unchangeable
- God can defeat all oppression both worldly dictators and evil spiritual princes too
- God lifts up the unlikely to do so,
- The shepherd becomes king, The fisherman preaches, the baby in a stable rules the universe

At the end of the day Sin is about you wanting a place on the throne

The only ones worthy of such a place are the ones who know that that place belongs to God and God alone

We lay our rights aside because we realise before God we have no rights at all – this is humility

King David is a great example a man who God Chose. He had humble beginnings- the youngest son

and a mere shepherd. But God loved that about him and gave him a kingdom. HOWEVER when he

behaved like he deserved the kingdom and became proud and forgot to be humble several times in his life God had to bring him back to a place where he realised again without God he was nothing.

This is what it means to be a man after God's Heart, not that you don't make mistakes but that you don't defend the mistakes you have made, you admit them ask for forgiveness and start living the right way again.

*1:53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.*

- The Kingdom of God looks after the needy
- Avarice and greed will not be tolerated
- Avarice was the sin of Sodom, the wicked practices they engaged in were just a symptom of their greed
- Our world is exactly the same today

Bumper sticker said hell is ok my friends will be there

This person obviously found loved their friends and enjoyed their friends a great deal-

But it doesn't matter how nice hell is because there is no way to fulfil the purpose you were intended for while you are there forever

And I think the thing that makes hell bad is that you understand where you should have been in your heart only before you go.

All humans get to see God and get full awareness of who he is when they die, but only those who comprehend this in this life get to spend eternity fulfilling their purpose.

Hell could be a tropical paradise resort with every imaginable activity and heaps of people you know there, but once you see God and then never get to see him again you won't enjoy where you are or who you are with, in fact you will regret it forever. Don't sacrifice heavens Glory for worldly pleasures. Find Joy Hope Peace and Love in God Alone.

Does the bible call us to give up some earthy pleasures to follow God – YES!

But we were not made for this world's pleasures; we were made for God's pleasure.

*"...the spiritual riches of the poorest saints do infinitely transcend the temporal riches of all the wicked men in the world"*

*Thomas Brooks [Precious remedies against Satan's devices]*

*"Contentment as to worldly goods makes men rich, but contentment with our spiritual condition is the index of poverty!" Charles H Spurgeon*

#### Questions for your soul

- Where do you find you joy?
- In what do you hope?
- Who do you love?
- Are you at peace with God?
- Do you know why you were made?

Q. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

This is the heart attitude of Mary

This is the heart that God gives his people just like he did when He put Jesus into Mary, he wants to transform us when he puts Christ within us

Metaphorically we too give birth to Christ in our actions and deeds in the world as Mary eventually gave birth to Jesus physically. But this is a metaphor for another sermon- my point in mentioning it is only that it is impossible for Christ's work to come out of you if he is not in you in the first place.

Likewise this great song which reflects on God and his salvation and judgement was only possible for Mary to speak because she had built scripture into her heart as she grew

Don't force what you want to be true onto the bible [or just take certain parts of the bible] but let the whole truth shape you.

You might be amazed what God brings out of your life if you remain faithful to God.

Before you doubt God's ability to change things consider this: "God made everything out of nothing"

**HE MADE A HUMBLE VIRGIN PREGNANT AND SHE BECAME THE MOTHER OF THE MESSIAH.**