

Luke 1:39-55: In those days Mary arose & went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰ & she entered the house of Zechariah & greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ & when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² & she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, & blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." ⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ & my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me, & holy is his name. ⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; ⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones & exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, & the rich he has sent empty away. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham & to his offspring forever."

Intro: Mark Jones: The incarnation was, for the Son of God, a humiliation beyond compare. The Son who thirsted was the same who made water; the Son who was too tired to carry his cross was the same who upholds the entire world; the Son whose side was pierced was the same who gave breath and life to the one who did it. The incarnation of the Son of God, in this world of sin and misery, was truly an act of humiliation. It began as his birth and continued to his death and burial . . . All that belongs to God, Jesus possesses. All that makes someone truly human, Jesus possesses . . . Jesus learned and Jesus knew all things; Jesus died and Jesus gives life to all living creatures; Jesus drank from his mother's breasts and Jesus provided his mother with the milk to feed him. Only the incarnation of the Son of God can explain such statements.

- **Herman Bavinck:** Christ, the incarnate Word, is the central fact of the entire history of the world.

Last year: We meditated on Gabriel's announcement to Mary that, though she was a virgin, the Holy Spirit would come upon her & the power of the Most High would overshadow her, & she would conceive a son to be named Jesus. He would be holy & the Son of God. And Gabriel told her: **Luke 1:32-33:** He will be great & will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, & he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, & of his kingdom there will be no end.

- **Luke 1:36-38:** "And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, & this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

This year, we see the now pregnant Mary visit the now pregnant Elizabeth, Mary erupts into a beautiful song of praise known as the Magnificat, coming from the first phrase in the song: "My soul magnifies the Lord!"

God's mighty & merciful reversals for us in Christ enable us & move us to true, heart worship that magnifies God: fear of God, humility, trust, joy, prayer, praise, poetry, songs, & love.

1. A Joyful Meeting (The Visitation)

Luke 1:39-45: In those days Mary arose & went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰ & she entered the house of Zechariah & greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ & when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. & Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² & she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, & blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ & why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ & blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord"

a. Mary goes to visit her relative Elizabeth: A young teenager & an older, barren woman meet & rejoice in God! (Reversals)

b. John the Baptist is a human baby in Elizabeth's womb: At the greeting of Mary, the baby leaps for joy! John is a baby in the womb; not a clump of cells! He leaps! He leaps for joy! Babies have joy! Not clumps of cells!

c. John the Baptist, a baby in the womb, is the first person recorded in Scripture to rejoice in Jesus: Jesus brings joy! God Himself is to be our full & complete happiness!

Philip Ryken: “Not yet born, already John prophesies,” wrote Maximus of Turin, “and while still in the enclosure of his mother’s womb, confesses the coming of Christ with movements of joy.” John the Baptist was the only child ever to use a womb for a pulpit. In the liquid darkness of his mother’s womb, the unborn child kicked for joy, leaping at the sound of Mary’s voice, and in this way preparing people for the coming of Christ.

- **Isaiah 35:4-6:** Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come & save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, & the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, & the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

- **Psalm 16:11:** You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Hymn: Joy to the world, the Lord is come; Let Earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room; And Heaven and nature sing!
And Heaven and nature sing; And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing!

d. The Triune God is at work: Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 41); Mary is the mother of “my Lord” (v. 43); And this fulfills what Mary was told by the Lord (v. 45). Father, Son, & Holy Spirit; One God; Three Persons!

e. Elizabeth confesses Jesus is Lord: v. 43: & why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (She is humble! She’s the first to confess Jesus is Lord! Psalm 110: David referred to Messiah as my Lord)

f. Elizabeth blesses Mary: v. 42: Blessed are you among women; Jesus greater; Mary’s blessed: God’s child/Baby

1) This does not mean that Mary was sinless: The immaculate conception is false teaching! (v. 47: God my Savior)

2) She was a faithful believer in the LORD: v. 45: blessed is she who believed . . .

3) She is very highly favored: Luke 1:48: from now on all generations will call me blessed(Lord is with her/Baby)

4) Jesus says we can all be even more blessed than Mary: Luke 11:27-28: “Blessed is the womb that bore you, & the breasts at which you nursed!” But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God & keep it!”

Philip Ryken: As blessed as it was for Mary to nurse Jesus as her breast, it is even more blessed to hear and to do the word of God . . . As Augustine said . . . “Mary was more blessed in accepting the faith of Christ than in conceiving the flesh of Christ.” (Have you accepted Jesus Christ by faith? GOSPEL!)

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2. Mary Praises God With A Song (Magnificat=Latin For Magnifies)

Luke 1:46-55: And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ & my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me, & holy is his name. ⁵⁰ & his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; ⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones & exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, & the rich he has sent empty away. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham & to his offspring forever."

a. What God has done in Christ ought to move us to sing! Philip Ryken: Mary's song is the first of four nativity hymns in Luke's Gospel: Mary’s . . . Zechariah’s . . . the angel’s . . . & Simeon’s . . . Graham Scroggie rightly identified these Christmas carols as “the last of the Hebrew Psalms, and the first of the Christian hymns.” . . . Luke included these lyrics because he understood that the gospel is & must be a musical. What God has done in

Christ demands to be praised. It is not enough simply to say what God has done to save us – what he has done also needs to be celebrated in song.

b. Our songs ought to bleed Bible: Philip Ryken: The Magnificat either quotes from or alludes to verses from Genesis, Deuteronomy, 1 & 2 Samuel (Hannah’s song, 1 Sam. 2), Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Habakkuk, & Zephaniah. Mary tried to put virtually the whole Bible into her song! (May we have Bible-saturated teenagers!)

c. Mary magnifies the Lord (v. 46): She, like a telescope, shows how really big, glorious, & great God truly is!

John Piper: There are two kinds of magnifying: microscope magnifying & telescope magnifying. The one makes a small thing look bigger than it is. The other makes a big thing begin to look as big as it really is. When David says, “I will magnify God with thanksgiving,” he does not mean, “I will make a small God look bigger than He is.” He means, “I will make a big God begin to look as big as He really is.” We are not called to be microscopes. We are called to be telescopes. Christians are not called to be con-men who magnify their product out of all proportion to reality, when they know the competitor’s product is far superior. There is nothing & nobody superior to God. And so the calling of those who love God is to make His greatness begin to look as great as it really is. That’s why we exist, why we were saved, as Peter says in 1 Peter 2:9, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” The whole duty of the Christian can be summed up in this: feel, think, and act in a way that will make God look as great as He really is. Be a telescope for the world of the infinite starry wealth of the glory of God. This is what it means for a Christian to magnify God.

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d. Mary magnifies the Lord from the depths of her inner being (heart): vs. 46-47: My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ & my spirit rejoices in God my Savior

She is not like the Jewish religious leaders who worship God with their lips but their hearts are far from God!

e. Mary rejoices in God her Savior (v. 47): Mary needed a Savior! She needed to be saved from sin!

Luke 2:11: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (**Jesus is God!**)

f. Mary’s worship focuses on God, Who He is & what He’s done: All the high favor & grace Mary had was a gift from God (7 “He has’s!”): **Luke 1:46-55:** Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, & my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me, & holy is His name. & His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; He has brought down the mighty from their thrones & exalted those of humble estate; He has filled the hungry with good things, & the rich He has sent empty away. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham & to his offspring forever."

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g. God has looked on the humble estate of His servant Mary (v. 48): Mary is a young, poor, peasant girl. In the eyes of the world, she’s nobody! But this is who God chooses! God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble

God’s reversal: 1 Cor. 1:25-29: For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, & the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not

many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Song: I'm just a nobody, trying to tell everybody, about a Somebody, Who can save anybody!

h. Mary will be called blessed by all generations (v. 48): It's an amazing gift to be chosen to bear the God-Man!

i. God Who is mighty has done great things for her (v. 49), & He has shown strength with His arm (v. 51): God has overshadowed her with the Holy Spirit so that the God-Man, Jesus Christ, is conceived in her womb! God has kept all His promises to Israel! God has sent the Savior Who would save His people from their sins!

Song: Our God is so big, So strong, and so mighty; There's nothing our God cannot do. That's right!

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j. God's name is holy (v. 49): Mary declares that God is set apart! There's no one like Him! He is perfect!

John Piper: God's holiness is his infinite value as the absolutely unique, morally perfect, permanent person that he is and who by grace made himself accessible.

k. God's mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation (v. 50):

- **Nehemiah 1:11:** O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, & to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, & give success to your servant today, & grant him mercy in the sight of this man.
- **Habakkuk 3:2:** O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.
- **Psalms 147:11:** The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.

What does it mean to fear God? It is reverence; it is awe; it is to be amazed by Him; But it's also to fear Him!

- **Mark 4:41:** they were filled with great fear & said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind & sea obey him?"
- **Matthew 10:28:** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

And for the believer, there is great joy in fearing God, because you know that He is for you! His wrath is gone!

l. God has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts (v. 51): God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble! God has always done this, & He will especially do it through the Son of God Mary will bear! (Reversal!)

Luke 10:21: In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."

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m. God has brought down the mighty from their thrones & exalted those of humble estate (v. 52):

Great reversal: Daniel 4:34-35: At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of

the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

- **1 Corinthians 1:18-19:** For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

Phil Ryken: The person he exalts is the humble servant who does his will. The person he humbles is the powerful leader who refuses to acknowledge his need for God. We see this happen all the way through the Gospel of Luke. The rich man goes to hell, while the poor man is carried home to be with the people of God. The prayers of the self-righteous Pharisee are denied, but the sinful tax collector goes home justified. As Jesus said, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, & he who humbles himself will be exalted". At the end of the Gospel comes the greatest reversal of all: God the Son-who had once humbled himself to become a man & then to endure the painful, shameful death of the cross-is raised from the dead in triumph. Having humbled himself, he is exalted.

n. God has filled the hungry with good things, & the rich He has sent empty away (v. 53): Another reversal!

1) God provides physical food: Manna; Ravens brought bread & meat to Elijah

2) God provides spiritual food: **Psalm 34:8:** Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

John 6:31-33, 35: Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven & gives life to the world." . . . Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

Jesus sends the rich away empty: Luke 6:24: But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation; Rich Young Ruler; Rich man & Lazarus; Matt. 6: Store up treasures in heaven & not on earth!

o. God has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to their fathers, to Abraham & to His offspring forever (vs. 54-55): Galatians 3:8, 13-14, 29: And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." . . . ¹³⁻¹⁴ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" – so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith . . . ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

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God's greatest reversals: The incarnation; Jesus' death; Jesus' resurrection; Jesus' ascension to reign forever!

Christ Is The LORD To Magnify
Like Telescopes Enlarge Your Eye
To See What's Big Far In The Sky
No One's Greater Than Christ On High
Therefore We Sing And Praise For Aye
He's Power, Mighty That Is Why
The Virgin's Blessed With Child And Thy
Son The Incarnation My
Savior, God-Man Came To Die
Then Rise Alive To Death Defy

So We In Hell Shall Never Fry
By Faith Alone We're Just And Cry
Hallelujah! Praises Fly
Scatters The Proud Who've Gone Awry
Lifts Up The Humble By And By
Fills The Hungry Full Supply
The Rich He Sends Away Deny
His Mercy's Great If You Rely
On Him Alone For Joy Nigh
For He Is All We Magnify!