

## The Magnificat

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Luke 1: 46-55 (ESV)

- One of my favorite Christmas songs that has ever been written is the classic song Mary Did You Know
  - Because it really makes me think about what exactly did Mary know?
  - Did she really know what she was getting into when the angel told her that she would conceive God?
  - Was she aware of the implications of what she was going to go through and the role in history that she was going to play?
- So today I want to look at a part of the Christmas story that I think gets overlooked this time of year,
- And this comes toward the end of Luke chapter 1, and if you have your bibles you can go ahead and turn there.

- To set the scene, Zechariah was a priest in Judah, who's wife Elizabeth was barren so they couldn't have any children.
  - Now in their old age, where they would have been well beyond their child bearing years, the Angel Gabriel visits Zechariah in the temple and tells him that he and his wife are going to miraculously conceive a son and they will call him John.
- Zechariah says to Gabriel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years."
  - And because he didn't believe, the angel tells him that he's not going to be able speak until the baby is born.
- A few months later, Gabriel again makes another visit, but this time he goes to see Zechariah and Elizabeth's cousin Mary, and lets her know that she is about to conceive the baby Jesus.
  - Then Gabriel tells her that Elizabeth, her relative, is also miraculously pregnant

- So Mary decides to go spend some time processing all of this with her cousins. And during her stay, Mary writes this beautiful, prophetic song of praise known by some as the Magnificat found in Luke chapter 1, beginning in verse 46:

***- And Mary said, "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 behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He Who is mighty has done great things for me, and Holy is His Name. And 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 and exalted those of humble estate; He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in***

***remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever." And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home."***

***-Luke 1: 46-56 (ESV)***

- PRAY

- *I'm a pretty big sports guy, I don't know if any of you really knew that about me....but I am*

• *When I was younger I loved playing sports and know my biggest hobby and pastime is watching and keeping up with what's going on in the sports world*

- *Now I think I got spoiled working at the church I did for so many years in Shelby because I worked with a bunch of guys who were sports guys too*

- *But once I got into the church planting process, and going to conferences, work shops and gatherings of other pastors and church planters, I began to realize that there aren't that many sports guys in the ministry world*

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- Sports is my go to small talk, so I wasn't connecting easily with a lot of the guys I was around
- And on top of that, I felt like I wasn't able to find anyone that even saw ministry and church leadership the same way that I did
  - I felt like none of the other guys were catching the vision that I felt like the Lord was giving me during this time
  - I was around a bunch of guys that had different experiences, different personalities, and different perspectives, and that's fine, but if I'm honest it was starting to get very lonely
  - I was starting to second guess what I felt like I was hearing from the Lord about the way we were going to start this church
- However, one day Rachel and I were down in Durham for a church planters gathering and in one of the sessions, I don't remember what was being talked about, but I remember once again cringing a bit and thinking, "Ehhh I don't know about that..."
- But to my surprise there was a young latino pastor two tables down from me who raised his hand, and asked the questions and voiced the very concerns that I had been thinking!
  - And I thought, "Oh I might like this guy!"
- So after, I went over and talked to him, and it was so encouraging because he had been thinking and feeling about church leadership and ministry the same way I had been
  - I finally felt like I found someone who was speaking the same language as I was!
- And the more we talked the more we realized how similar our stories were, we had the same youth ministry background at similar sending churches
  - Our timelines of planting were almost exactly the same
  - I had just moved to Hickory, he had just moved out of Hickory into Charlotte
  - We both had our first born sons born during our planting processes!

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- It was wild!
- But to put the icing on the cake, the next morning he comes down and sits at our table and says, “Hey bro, you catch that Lakers-Warriors game last night?”
- I was like, “PSST, YES I stayed up way to late watching that Late watching that Lakers-Warriors game”
  - We started talking NBA and NFL and all the things
  - And ever since that day we have remained close, we have helped support each other’s ministry’s, and we have been in multiple fantasy football leagues together!
  - And I will forever be grateful to the Lord for bringing Pastor Josué into my life when he did
- It’s just so refreshing and so relieving when you go through a season where you feel all lone, you feel like you’re out on an island all by yourself, and then finally God brings someone

*along that feels like they’re speaking the same language you are.*

- *Cuz I’m sure most of you know, that there can be times were you’re surrounded by people, but still feel like you’re by yourself.*
- I think that, if we’re open to it, God intentionally brings people into our lives that have an understanding about what we’re going through, what we’ve been through, or what we will go through because they have experienced similar things as well.
- Which is why the most powerful tool you have in your arsenal for evangelism is YOUR STORY. Because you never know who is going to be able to relate and who it is going to impact.
  - *It’s funny because so many people are so desperate to have Unique stories. So we exaggerate, or fabricate, or try to make things seem a little bit more dramatic than they actually are so people will see how interesting we are and get a little more attention.*

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- *But it's not really the unique stories that make an impact on people's lives.*
    - *It's relatable stories that truly influence people.*
    - *The unique and different stories are fun and entertaining, but the stories that truly make a difference and impact people's lives are the ones that people hear and say, "Hey! Me too! They're speaking the same language I am! I'm not the only one"*
  - But so often we are hesitant to genuinely tell our stories because we fall into believing the lies:
    - *"No one is going to understand me"*
    - *"No one would be able to relate to me"*
    - *"No one's going to believe me, people will look down on me, No one will ever see me the same way again!"*
  - Now if ANYONE had a good reason to think that way, it would have been Mary!
- Here we have a young teenage girl, most likely anywhere from the age range of 13-17 years old. (Which it was not uncommon at that time for that to be the age range in which women got married and began to have children)
    - Now, she was not technically married yet, she was betrothed, which is similar to our engagement period, except it was still legally binding.
  - However, during the betrothal period, it was a 12 month process in which the soon to be wife and husband would not see each other that often, if at all, while the man would work hard to build their house (most commonly an addition onto his family's house) and make enough money so that they could be set up for success when they were officially married.
    - Also, one of the reasons why they would not see each other during that time was to ensure their purity so they would not be tempted to sleep together before their wedding night.

- And it's during this stage and season of her life that the Angel Gabriel, visits her and tells her that, in her virginity, she is going to conceive and bear a son.
- If I'm Mary, I'm thinking "Who in the world is going to believe that?!"
  - What is she supposed to tell mom and dad?? *"Ohh mom, dad, its not what you think! I'm still a virgin! God just put the unborn Messiah in my belly to save the world from their sins!"*
  - NOPE...probably gonna not gonna buy that!
- What is she supposed to tell Joseph! There's no way he's going to be believe that she wasn't unfaithful in some way.
- The community is going to ostracize her, she is going to be seen as an adulteress (COULD BE sentenced to stoning), but at the very LEAST she would be an object of shame for her family for the rest of her life!
- Why? Because no one is going to understand, no one is going to believe her
- God knew exactly what she would be thinking and feeling, so the angel tells her... ***"And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."*** -Luke 1:36-37 (ESV)
- Who else could relate to a miraculous pregnancy?
  - Her cousin Lizzy, over in Judah, who had been barren her whole life, and was at this point way past the age of being able to conceive, is miraculously pregnant now too!
- Who else is going to believe that the Angel Gabriel came to visit her?
  - Well, that same exact Angel visited Elizabeth's husband to tell him that THEY TOO were going to have a son.

- Who is going to believe her that the Messiah is actually coming?
  - Elizabeth, who was told that her son was coming to prepare the way for the Messiah
- So what does Mary do? ***“In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, (70 mile journey) and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.” -Luke 1:39-40 (ESV)***
  - Mary’s gotta be thinking, if anyone is going to understand what I am going through, and what I am about to go through...it’s Elizabeth, so I’m going to go spend some time with her!
- But still, she’s got to be thinking how to approach the subject. You know how prideful and arrogant it sounds for someone to claim that their seemingly illegitimate child is the Promised Messiah and Savior of the the World?? You can’t just come out there and say that...
  - But right as she says Hello...verse 41 says, ***“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” -Luke 1:41-45 (ESV)***
  - What kind of relief did that have to be for Mary?? All this time trying to figure out the best way to explain in words what she is going through...and she didn’t even have to!
    - The Holy Spirit knew exactly the type of encouragement that Mary needed.

- Sometimes we'll think, "Well if I had an angel visit me and tell me exactly what I needed to know, then I would be good. "
  - Mary had that, but it still wasn't enough. What Mary needed was a shoulder to lean on, someone close to her that could actually understand what she had going on, and that could relate and love on her.
- Man, I wanna be like Elizabeth. I wanna be someone who gets so filled with the Holy Spirit that I can encourage someone the exact way that they need it.
  - *Matt getting the pregnancy test in the grocery store*
  - That's the type of Christian I want to be. I want to be so in tune with the Holy Spirit and so familiar with His Word, that I can be used to say the right thing at the right time that allows God to bring the right encouragement into someone's life, right when they need it
  - Just like that lady did for my brother, and just like Elizabeth did for Mary
- I don't want to be someone that just gets caught up in what I'm going through or comparing my situation to theirs...I just want the Holy Spirit to fill me at the right time, in such a way, that I can help confirm what God is doing in and through someone's life that encourages them and FIRES up about living for God.
- And Mary Get's Fired Up!
  - You know what Mary didn't do...when encouraged by Elizabeth??
  - She didn't say... "No you!"
  - When Elizabeth says, "Blessed are you among women!" Mary didn't say, "Who, little ole me?? That's so sweet, No, YOU'RE the blessed one!"
- No no, Mary showed TRUE Humility.
- In Verse 46, ***"And Mary said, "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***



***behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He Who is Mighty has done great things for me, and Holy is His Name.”***  
**- Luke 1:46-49 (ESV)**

- Some might say, “Well that’s not very humble, Mary...talking about how all of the generations are going to call you blessed!”
  - But actually it was the most humble response she could have had..because
- **True Humility is Accepting and Praising**
  - Accepting what God has done, and praising Him for it.
- John: The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved
  - Was John full of himself? No, I would argue he was one of the most humble because he decided to accept what God said about him and define himself by it
  - God tells us that we are loved. He tells us in His word that we are Holy, Righteous, and Redeemed, Made New Children of God

- And it can only be prideful if we think we had anything to do with it
- True humility, I believe, is accepting what God says about you with the realization that there is nothing you could ever do to deserve it or to make up for it
- And that’s why we praise Him...because its not about me, what I have, or who I am, its more about Who HE is and What He’s done

- Mary, at no point, did she think she deserved to be the mother of the Messiah.
- When she says, that God looked on her “Humble Estate,” She’s NOT saying that God saw how humble of a person she was and chose her because of her humility and her qualities.
- No, she’s saying, “I’m just a small town girl from a working class village out in the middle of nowhere!”...even one of the disciples, would say, “Does Anything Good Come Out Of Nazareth??”...Mary’s saying “I couldn’t have more humble beginnings!”

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- *“Yet, God chose to use me! So therefore, my soul magnifies the Lord! My Spirit Rejoices in God my Savior! Everyone is going to call me blessed, why?? Because HE WHO IS MIGHTY has done great things for me!”*

- It has nothing to do with me or what I think I deserve, it has everything to do with HIS Grace, and HIS Mercy.
- So I’m just going to Accept it, and Praise Him for it, that’s true Humility

- ***“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it’s thinking of yourself less” -CS Lewis***

- You see, what Mary understood is that WE, ourselves, are NEVER the focal point of any blessing that God brings into our lives.
- That’s why this theology, of “Oh, I’m a child of God, so I deserve this, I deserve that. I’m claiming this raise in the name of Jesus because I’m a Christian, I tithe, and I deserve it”...that type of theology is so dangerous and manipulative and confusing...because God isn’t the focal point of it, we are.

- Me? I don’t deserve any blessing from God... but he chooses to bless me, and show me grace, and mercy, and favor, and I don’t have time to waste thinking about what I think I deserve, when I need to be spending that time just appreciating and being in awe of who He is and that He would ever bless me with anything at all in the first place!

- And you know, that Word “Blessed” that Mary uses can also be translated, ***Blessed (makarizō): “To be pronounced fortunate.”***

- So this verse could read, “From now on, All generations will pronounce me fortunate.”

- Now, when Mary first gets this news, do you think that Mary was thinking about how fortunate she was??

- NO! She’s thinking about how her entire world, life, and plan is getting turned upside down. She’s probably thinking about how the world is going to see her and how her fiancé is probably going to leave her.

- The angel has to tell her to not be afraid, why? Because this entire situation is TERRIFYING!!
- But this is what Praise can do
- **PRAISE CAN TURN A BURDEN TO A BLESSING**
- I've quoted my friend Jake before who once told me that "A blessing is any experience the Lord allows me to go through that causes me to know Him more."
  - And now Mary can confidently say that she will be blessed, not because of who she is or what she can do...but Because she is going to know the Savior on a personal level that no one else on the planet ever will.
  - She's gonna be there when His life begins, she's going to watch Him grow up, have a front row to seat to His life and ministry. She's gonna be there at His feet when they put him on the cross, and she is going to be right there when He raises from the grave
- What Praise was able to help Mary put into perspective, before she even experienced any of that, was realizing that the greatest inconvenient and confusing situation of her life was actually going to be the greatest blessing in her life
- And she was not the focal point of that blessing!
  - We see Jesus nip that in the bud, in Luke Chapter 11, as Jesus is teaching, a woman in the crowd called out, "God bless your mother—the womb from which you came," Jesus replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice."
- Mary is not the focal point here...we love her, she's awesome
- But there is no part of scripture that ever makes Mary the focal point of adoration or worship
- And Mary wasn't blessed because of what she did or was going to do. Elizabeth tells her,

***“And blessed is she who (conceived? Was so humble? Was about to give birth? No...blessed is she who simply) believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” -Luke 1:45 (ESV)***

- That word, **Believed (pisteuō)**: can also be translated, **“To place confidence in”**
- Mary is blessed, happy, and fortunate because she has placed her confidence in her God and His Word
- Which brings me to the last point...
- **CONSISTENT PRAISE BREEDS CONFIDENCE IN GOD**
- Charles Spurgeon once said that, “Prayer and Praise are the oars by which we row our boats into the deep waters of the Knowledge of God.”
- Its apparent from her prayer and her Praise that Mary, knows her God!
- *If we’re going to paraphrase her song here:*

- *She knows that He is Lord and He is Savior. She knows that He is Mighty and Holy! He’s merciful and deserving of our Awe and Wonder.*
  - *She says that there is no room for pride compared to a God who is so strong, powerful and wise.*
  - *He takes care of the needy and humbles the entitled.*
  - *He helps, or holds fast, to His people and He is trustworthy, faithful, and consistent now and for forever!*
- The fact that THIS GOD, came to save ME! Should leave me flabbergasted every single day
  - I take Him for granted whenever I get lazy with my praise. You know, I have those Sundays too, where I just go through the motions. Where I take for granted the worship and powerful lyrics and the opportunity to PRAISE Him and make Him great. To Magnify Him.

- And when I get lazy with my Praise, it's incredible how quickly I can become entitled, thinking about what I think I deserve and what God should be doing for me. When I don't even deserve a second of His time.
- Mary's prayer is very reminiscent of Hannah's prayer when she had Samuel in 1 Samuel chapter 2 when it says, "***There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides You; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.***" - ***1 Samuel 2:2-3 (ESV)***
  - She's also saying, there is no room for pride and arrogance and entitlement when we are Praising the All-mighty, All-Knowing, Ever-Present God of the Ages.
- I add absolutely no value to Him, He is already Holy, Perfect, and Complete all on His own, there is nothing I can do to make Him any greater than He already is.
- But yet, even when I cared more about my sin than I did Him, He still loved me and pursued me, and wanted to save my soul.
- When I finally got to the end of myself, and realized my need for a savior, He was right there waiting. Arms open wide!
- I don't want to lose the wonder of that, like David I need to pray for God to "Restore to me the Joy of His Salvation!"
- I hope and pray that's what the Christmas season is for us. A time where the Joy of our salvation is restored to us. Where we wouldn't just remember the cute manger, but the magnitude of the Cross.
- *MAN, I wish I could have felt the anticipation around these two miraculous pregnancies. What did the energy in the house feel like for those 3 months that Mary and Elizabeth were together??*
- They didn't know exactly what God was going to do, or how He was going to bring salvation

to Israel, but they knew that He was coming to do something completely unprecedented.

- They knew that this was going to be the most important and significant birth in all of human history.
  - And if they didn't take the time to Praise Together, Mary probably could have just gotten caught up in feeling the burden of the inconvenience rather than the blessing of the opportunity to be a part of the Story of God.
- Consistent Praise, breeds confidence in God. And that Praise can turn any burden into a blessing...by causing us to know Him more
- Now when it came time for Elizabeth to deliver, Mary headed back to Nazareth, probably before all of the extended family arrived so she wouldn't be a distraction during the birth.
- Now 8 days after the baby was born, they took the child to the temple and this is when they would name the child. Now, everyone is thrown off when Elizabeth says she wants to name the baby John. Because it was customary for the

child to take the name of his father, or at least another relative, but no one in their family has the name John.

- Robert Fredrick, Fredrick Robert...Brian
- That's what this felt like to these people so they're arguing with Elizabeth, but then Zechariah, who still can't speak at the time, asks for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And verse 63 says, **"And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God."** **Luke 1: 63b-64 (ESV)**
- Skip down to verse 67, **"And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people and has raised up a Horn of Salvation for us in the house of His servant David," -Luke 1: 67-69 (ESV)**
- Verse 76, **"And you, child (John), will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you**

***will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” -Luke 1: 76-79 (ESV)***

- Even the birth of John wasn't about the birth of John. It was about preparing the way for the Sunrise that would visit us from on High.
- When we were lost in darkness and finally realized the world had nothing to offer, God allows His Light to shine in our lives, to guide us and give us Hope and Peace.
- All because God sent that baby into the world so that the sin and selfishness that separated us from Him could be bridged by a cross. He paid the price for our mishaps and paved the way to our peace.

- And all it takes is believing and accepting the free gift of salvation and relationship that He offers.
- It has nothing to do with who we are or what we have done. It's all because of His Grace, and His Mercy that we can be called blessed for all of eternity by Knowing Him.
- And All we gotta do is Accept it, and Praise Him for it.
- So that's what we're going to end this service by doing. Accepting what He's done for us and Praising Him and His Great Name.