

Luke 1:39-55

The majority of our sermon text for today is made up of **The Song Of Mary** - which has been known for **centuries** as the **Magnificat**. Her song **got** this name from the **Vulgate** - the Latin **translation** of the Bible. In the Vulgate, her song **begins** with the word **magnificat**. The Christian church has always **treasured** **The Song Of Mary**. Over 1,400 years ago Christian congregations started to **include** it as a regular part of their worship services. In fact, we just used it **now**, in the **hymn** which we just sang, and we **also** sing it whenever we use the order of worship for **Evening Prayer** in our hymnal. So today let's take a few minutes to look at **The Song Of Mary** - the **Magnificat** - and by doing so, we'll see how we can imitate Mary's **humble attitude**, and give all **praise** to the Christ-child, our Savior. But before we delve into the actual **words** of Mary's song, it's good for us to remember the circumstances which **surround** her song.

Our text **begins** with Mary's visit to the house of her cousin, **Elizabeth**. Why would Mary make this **journey** from **Nazareth** all the way to the **hill country** of **Judea**? Perhaps she wanted to **get away**, because the people who knew her in **Nazareth** wouldn't **understand** her pregnancy. After all, who would **believe** that the Angel **Gabriel** had appeared to her, and that he had told her that she would be the person who would give birth to the promised **Messiah**? In addition to **that**, it's hard to imagine the **impact** that news must have had on Mary **herself**. Since she was still a very **young** girl, probably only in her **teens**, she must have been **overwhelmed** by this news. She had **questions** like, "Why **me**? And why **now**?" After all, Mary didn't seem to be anyone who was **special** in any way. She wasn't from a **wealthy** family, nor was she the daughter of **influential** members of **society**. She was just a lowly **servant**. And seemingly out of **nowhere**, Gabriel told her that she had been chosen by **God** to be the **mother** of His Son. Maybe cousin **Elizabeth** would have some answers.

So, shortly after she heard the news, Mary went to **see** her cousin Elizabeth. By the way, Gabriel had **also** told Mary that **Elizabeth** - even at her **advanced** age - was **also** going to have a child, so she could certainly **relate** to what Mary was experiencing. No doubt Mary wanted to have a heart-to-heart **conversation** with Elizabeth about this major turn of events in **both** of their lives. When Mary arrived and greeted Elizabeth, **another** miracle occurred. As we heard in our text, "*Just as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the **Holy Spirit**.*" Remember, the baby who was in **Elizabeth's** womb was **John the Baptist** - the one whom God sent into the world to **prepare** the way

for His Son. Even while he was still in the womb, John was already doing his job. And filled with the **Holy Spirit**, Elizabeth **understood** what John's **leaping** in the womb really **meant**. She exclaimed to Mary, "*Blessed are **you** among women, and blessed is the **fruit** of your **womb**! But why am **I** so **favored** that the **mother of my Lord** should come to me? In fact, just now, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb **leaped for joy**! Blessed is she who **believed**, because the promises spoken to her from the Lord will be **fulfilled**.*" I wonder how the pro-abortionists try to explain **that** away. While he was still **unborn**, John experienced the **emotion** of **joy** at the approach of his **Savior**, who was **also** still unborn.

Think of how **important** these words of Elizabeth were for Mary. The **angel** had already told her that she was giving birth to the **Savior**, and now Elizabeth **confirmed** this truth, and even gave her the title, "*mother of my **Lord**.*" **All** of this must have been so **overwhelming** for Mary. So, with all of that emotion and anticipation welled up inside of her, she then broke out into **song**. And what a song it was! Let's take a look at the **first verse**. Mary sang, "*My soul proclaims the **greatness of the Lord**, and my spirit has rejoiced in God **my Savior**, because he has looked with favor on the **humble** state of his **servant**.*" Right from the very **beginning**, it's clear that the overriding **theme** of Mary's song is **praise to God** for **His** greatness. There's no hint of **self-pride** in her words. This song isn't about **her** - it's about her **God**. Mary knows that **she** is a **sinful** human being - a person who **isn't deserving** to be the mother of God. So, Mary **humbly** proclaimed the **greatness** of God, **her Savior**. Not only had He chosen **her** out of all the women in the world, but in one **great** and **merciful** action, He was finally fulfilling His **promise** to send a Savior - for **her**, and for **all people**.

Mary's **humble** attitude **continues** to shine forth as she goes on to sing, "*Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed, **because the Mighty One** has done **great things** for me, and holy is **his** name.*" Mary knows that she isn't being blessed because of **her virtue**, but rather, because she has such a wonderful **God**. Just think for a moment about how Mary's prediction has come **true** - that all generations would call **her** blessed. She's even referred to as the **blessed** Virgin Mary. But again, Mary didn't want the **focus** to be on **her**, because the **blessing** came from **God**.

We would do well to **imitate** Mary's humble attitude as we look at our lives and see that **we too** have been richly **blessed** by our gracious God. Certainly none of us has received a message from the angel **Gabriel**, like Mary did, but we can

confess right along with her that the Lord has looked with **favor** on **us**. And what a miracle **that** is. Just think about what we actually **deserve** from God because of our **sins**, and then **marvel** at the boundless **grace** and **mercy** He has **given** to us. That **alone** should be **very** humbling. It should drive any **hint** of **self-righteousness** right out of our minds. But unfortunately, our sinful nature wants nothing to **do** with that kind of humility. Sometimes we even find ourselves falling into the trap of thinking that we **deserve** the blessings God has given us. After all, we put in our time **worshipping Him** in church, we put our **money** into the offering plate, and we foolishly think that we live **our** lives **better** than those people “**out there**.” That sense of spiritual **entitlement** is completely **contrary** to the **humble** spirit that **Mary** had - the spirit which **we** should strive to **imitate**. Mary’s example of humility and faith puts our sinful pride to **shame**. We need to **confess** that we deserve **nothing** but **punishment** from our God, and that any **blessings** we have received from Him are completely due to His **mercy** and **love**.

Mary sings about this process of God **humbling** the **proud** and **lifting up** the **humble** in the next words of her song. She said, “*He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones. He has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent away empty.*” Mary recognized that the Lord’s way of acting was completely **different** from the world’s way of acting. The world heaps praise on the **rich** and the **proud**, but the **Lord** values those who are **humble**, **poor**, and **lowly** - those who put their trust in **Him**.

Again Mary’s song glorifies **God** because of who He **is**, and because of what He has **done**. Her song **concludes** with **these** words: “*He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.*” Mary was **overwhelmed** by the great mercy which the Lord had shown to His people, but she wasn’t **surprised** by it. Mary knew what the **Scriptures** say. She knew about the Lord’s promises of **mercy** to His people. And she knew that her gracious Lord always **keeps** His promises. She also knew that her Lord’s mercy extended to **her**, and to **all** of Abraham’s descendants **forever**. That promise was about to be **fulfilled** in the person of **Jesus**. Mary knew the child in her womb would be the world’s **redeemer**, and that’s where the **focus** needed to be - on **Jesus**, not on **her**.

May we strive to **imitate** Mary’s **humility** as we join together with her in giving all the **praise** and **glory** to her **Son**, Jesus. He was the **reason** she **sang** her song of praise, and He is the reason **we** sing today as well. The birth of Jesus

brought Him to the **earth**, to live a **perfect life** for us - a life which He freely **sacrificed** on the cross to **pay** for our sins, and earn **forgiveness** for us. It's impossible for us to think about **Mary** without giving praise to **God**, who chose to send His Son into this world on that first Christmas.

So this year as we celebrate Christmas, let's remember what we **heard** in **The Song Of Mary**. That will remind us to imitate her **humility**, and to give all our **praise** and **worship** to the **Child** that Mary bore - our Savior, **Jesus Christ**. Amen.