

Luke 1:46-56

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1. Intro

- a. Good morning...we're on this journey, together, in the gospel of Luke...
- b. Already we have been blessed and encouraged by Luke and we haven't even left Chapter 1 yet.
- c. It was actually last week I said to our service team, that, each week we bring you the word of God, it is so that our faith might be built up. We apply literally that God's word is living, and it will not return... My hope is that you are reading and reflecting for yourself – apart from the teaching/preaching here on a Sunday, what it is the Lord would show you, how he might direct you *"so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught"* (1:4).
- d. you'll recall the learnings from Neville's great message last week.... trusting God – that's a strong theme – trusting that God will do what he will do, and believing (links in with trusting), believing the promises of God, believing he never leaves us, believing he is coming again...
- e. The key learning from today's passage is: ***Our Worship is generated from a right understanding of God and God's word and a deep appreciation of Jesus.*** This means our souls glorify and our spirits rejoice when we see the greatness of God...
- f. So that brings us this morning to this amazing psalm/song of worship by Mary. Traditionally referred to as Mary's *Magnificat*,¹ Latin word simply meaning, *"to magnify or glorify the Lord"*
- g. Mary has seen something remarkable about God. That the next 30 years would be the most defining years in the human history.
- h. And so this is the song of a woman who trusted God, it is the word of a woman who believed God, Remember Elizabeth said to Mary (v. 45) *"Blessed is she (prophetic) who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!"*

¹ Also referred to as the hymn of the incarnation

It is the song of someone who loved the Lord; someone for whom deep gratitude and thankfulness to God spilled out in praise and worship.²

- i. I want us to try and see Mary's heart³, through the words of her song, so that our hearts are inspired to worship...

2. (READ Luke 1:46-55)

⁴⁶ And Mary said: "My **soul glorifies** the Lord ⁴⁷ and my **spirit rejoices** in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

3. Did we catch Mary's heart... "My **soul glorifies** the Lord and my **spirit rejoices** in God my Savior..." because of God, because he is, because he has...her worship is based exclusively on the basis of all God is!

- a. Our main points today will be looking at: **How Mary Worshipped? Why Mary Worshipped? Why, We Worship!**

4. HOW MARY WORSHIPPED?

- a. Before I go on it's important to realise again this is the song of someone who was pregnant out of wedlock, but rather than being overwhelmed by the risk to her own reputation, *i.e. her immediate circumstances*, the joy and humility we see here in her serving and worship of God was what she was more concerned about. **That, is spiritual and moral integrity.**
- b. I'm really interested Mary was able to so 'strongly assert her 'faith, confidence and trust in God.
 - i. What we see in this song is worship generated from a right understanding of God and God's word. "*I offer you*

² She is the model worshipper.

³ And that can be our heart too!

this, I give you this because...” ...rather than worship that is reactive to life’s’ circumstances. (See Ps. 42:11⁴)

- ii. When Mary burst out into praise – and that’s how I believe Luke presents this – it wasn’t trivial, superficial, hyped up or induced by anything else apart from God!
- iii. What she said here. i.e. that such worship and words were in her says a lot about how, and why she was able to respond to her unique circumstances the way she did
 - 1. Her worship and words indicate she was well familiar with OT scripture. It’s even possible she had composed and memorised these words?
 - 2. Luke is not referring back to the OT but there is the thought that Mary was drawing inspiration from Hannah’s prayer in 1 Sam. 2 *“My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance. “There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God”*
 - 3. Perhaps Mary also drew inspiration from other women of faith in the OT, like Sarah, Deborah, Ruth, and Abigail
- c. It’s clear Mary immersed herself in God and immersed herself in God’s word
- d. **How did Mary worship?**
 - i. She took (and relied on) scripture and applied that to her circumstances. Mary didn’t pronounce: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...” out of a “well” with nothing in it...*‘what comes up in the bucket is what’s down in the well’*
 - 1. Ps. 63:3 *You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you in a dry and parched land where there is no water.² I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.
³ Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.*
- e. Now note Vv. 46, 47, Mary glorifies with her soul and rejoices with her spirit...emphasising the fact she is giving her whole self over to God in praise and worship.

⁴ *Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? (Why am I see the weight of my circumstances above/greater than the power of God and the reality of God over these) Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.*

- i. *"My soul glorifies..."* why my soul? Souls don't speak mouths do. But I think what Mary is expressing is that her soul, that non-physical part of us, feels the weight of the need to reverence God and to obey God, to glorify him for who he is. She 'felt' God's greatness.
 - 1. E.g. Ps. 62:1-2 *Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*
 - 2. Think of Jesus' words in Matt. 11:29 *"take my yoke upon you...find rest for your (what?) souls. My soul, that eternal part of me, glorifies God.*
- ii. *"My soul glorifies..." **"and"** my spirit rejoices..."* and it is our spirit that helps us express our love to God. When our souls glorify God, our spirits rejoice⁵. Ps. 63:5 *"My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you"*
- f. **CONSIDER:** is there anything we will ever go through in life that God's word is insufficient to speak to? Is there anything we will ever go through in life where God has no power to effect change? Is there ever a time we can never rely on God or the truth of God's word?
 - i. Mary literally applied Ps. 119:11 *How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you*
 - ii. Jer. 19:15 *When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty.*
- g. "Soul glorifying...spirit rejoicing" worship. *How do we arrive there?* If we want to be people whose souls glorify the Lord, and whose spirit's rejoice, *humbly submitting ourselves to God's power and God's word is the key.*
 - i. (E)⁶ Luke 1:43 *But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*
 - ii. (M)⁷ Luke 1:48 *for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.*
 - iii. What's the opposite of the **humility** we see in M and E? Pride. Being proud. What's being proud? It's more of me

⁵ Our souls determine what our spirit does...

⁶ Elizabeth

⁷ Mary

and less of God. Can proud people worship God in “*spirit and in truth*” (John 4:23,24)?

- iv. **CONSIDER:** If you have struggled to break through and freely give yourself to God in soul glorifying and spirit rejoicing worship, it’s possible that pride is there somewhere...⁸
- h. Humility is one of the keys to understanding worship that pleases God.^{9 10}
- i. Worship happens when we’re overwhelmed by the graciousness of God, the truth of God, of our need for God and by what God has done for us.¹¹
- j. Mary is a model of how we worship. I think we see an important learning in *How Mary Worshipped*, it is that a posture of worship – fed by the word of God, full of the word of God, full of God the Holy Spirit – puts us in front of the daily challenges and circumstances we face (*proactive*), rather than behind them (*reactive*).
- k. **CONSIDER:** Circumstances are never harder, bigger or so complex that God is unable to walk us through them, because ‘he IS, he HAS’, he WILL be with us

5. WHY MARY WORSHIPPED?

- a. Everything listed in vv. 48-55 are a scriptural summary of *why Mary* could have such a posture of worship, why she would have so naturally worshipped God.
- b. Because she understood that God, in his goodness, in his greatness, in his character...is all enough *to warrant worship*. No superficial or artificial inducement of any kind was needed.
 - i. Vv. 48-55 speak to a number of the attributes of God: he is Saviour, Mighty One, he is holy, his mercy, he provides and he is faithful to his promises...

⁸ Now is the time to give that pride away, repent of that pride...

⁹ Many Psalms have this theme: e.g. 34; 86 (v.11); 90; 131

¹⁰ Antonyms of humility are pride and arrogance...*arrogance* is knowing what we ought to do and not doing it

¹¹ Find the Christian who has handed control to God and they know true joy, the Christian who struggles to hand over control to God will inevitably struggle with their joy.

John 15:11 *If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*

Psalms 16:11 *You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

1. *Our worship is generated from a right understanding of God and Gods word. As Luke recounts Marys song to Theophilus Luke wanted to impress upon him that this God Mary worships is not aloof, and that the attributes she sings of – his power, mercy, grace and judgment – are real and present.*
- ii. Let me point out here that Luke was writing this to Theophilus to encourage him to be aware of the danger of misrepresenting all of who God is. That there would be no trying to impress God with wealth, rank, and pride (talked about pride!). Marys song is clear in that God is no respecter of persons (see Acts 10:34-35¹²). i.e. God is who He is, and we believe in him, come to him, relate with him, as he is and worship him based exclusively on who he is.
 1. Merciful - (v. 51) *he has performed mighty deeds with his arm... (v.52) but has lifted up the humble... (v.53) He has filled the hungry with good things... (v.54) He has helped his servant Israel,*
 2. Judge – (v.51) *he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts... (v.52) He has brought down rulers from their thrones...(v53) but has sent the rich away empty.*
- iii. Mary, glorifies God for both, for all he is. She worships God for both his mercy, but also for his judgement.
 1. What a mature mind-set to have for such a young person...
- iv. Clearly she had a deep understanding of who God is. It was God and all he was and is that motivated Mary's worship.
- c. If we take anything from Marys example it is this: we cannot be mistaken that worship has occurred because we feel good, we've had a great experience, and everything around us is in perfect working order.
- d. Soul glorifying, spirit rejoicing worship occurs when I have seen the Lord for all he is, when I have humbled myself to him, when I have emptied myself of pride, when I have utterly depended on him, and when I have nothing except gratitude in my heart for him, all despite and in spite of...see Isa. 6:1-5

¹² See also James 2:1-9; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4; Rom. 2:9-11

- e. Worship is what we offer to God because of who he is.
 - i. Anything less is like an *"I'll wait and see how this pans out before I'll worship him"* mentality.
- f. We live in a day where people want to 'worship' God, yet have no desire at all to obey him or abide by his word, 'I want to live this lifestyle, I want to keep these old habits, but I want to worship God as well'.
 - i. That would be reading a redacted bible and worshipping a modified version of God...
 - ii. You can't call your car a Mazda, if you put a Holden engine in it, you put Hyundai brakes on it, you put Jeep wheels on it...that might be a car that suits you, but because of the mods you have made it's not a Mazda...¹³
- g. We must take God and worship of him, seriously.
- h. We misunderstand worship if we believe God conforms and flexes according to my truth. No, we are the clay! We conform and flex under *"his mighty hand"* (v.52) God will never be who we want him to be. He is who he is and we worship him¹⁴
 - i. God has mercy on those who fear him. He has mercy on those who have repented and turned to Christ. He has mercy on those who humble themselves and accept him for all he is.
- i. **CONSIDER:** To believe in God, to believe he is sovereign and in control, to trust God and to follow Christ, is to believe everything, and all there is, with God.
 - i. Luke was determined to show Theophilus precisely this in Marys song.¹⁵
 - ii. Only then, like Mary, are we on the path to full surrender, when we are overwhelmed by our magnificent God and his grace toward us.
- j. There is a very clear sense in Marys song that God owes her nothing, but that she has all she needs in him and from him. Her song is a response of overwhelming gratitude to God.¹⁶

¹³ Might look like a Mazda on the outside but on the inside it's something...well, else!

¹⁴ there are very real and present threats in the world right now coercing/tempting/forcing Christians to conform...What did Paul say? (Rom. 12:2) *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will"*

¹⁵ See Luke 18:18f...

¹⁶ In the context of all who God is and what he's done, he sees Mary, sees her humility, and chooses her.

- i. I've read that in Judaism there was so much reverence reserved for God, that there would be discussions about how God should be approached in the temple, right down to minute detail about the actual path priests should walk in approaching God. This is the sort of awe that was reserved for God. Nothing casual at all about this. The idea being it was *an honour to worship God*.
 - 1. Think of Moses (Ex. 3:5-6) removing his shoes because he stood on 'Holy ground'
- k. How do I have that kind of heart for God? **Humility!**
 - i. Humility, the key theme of this song, is what drives us toward God. Pride and the felt need to be in control of our lives, drives us away from God. Vv. 51 & 53 *He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.... He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty*

6. Conclusion

- a. So going back now to Marys opening words *"my soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour"* ...souls glorifying, spirits rejoicing are in direct proportion to how we know and respond to Gods character, Gods mercy, God's grace, Gods salvation.
- b. *On the 2nd Feb, just a few weeks ago* Captain Sir Tom Moore, the 100-year-old military veteran who won British hearts with his fundraising efforts during the pandemic, passed away from Covid-19. Many of us quite possibly followed this story in the news.

On the 6th April 2020, during the pandemic, with his 100th birthday approaching, Moore began a fundraising campaign for the staff, volunteers and patients in the British NHS. With the help of a walking frame he aimed to complete one hundred 25-metre lengths of his garden, in order to raise 1000 pounds, all in gratitude for the treatment he had received for skin cancer and a broken hip.¹⁷

¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_Tom 5th Feb 21

As it turns out, nearly £33 million was raised, donations from 1.5 million supporters, also receiving cards from 140,000 people.

His daughters, Hannah and Lucy when reflecting on his life and recent efforts said they were "nothing short of remarkable".

Prime Minister Boris Johnson called Mr Moore "not just a national inspiration but a beacon of hope for the world" as well as "a hero in the truest sense of the word".

"In the dark days of the Second World War he fought for freedom and in the face of this country's deepest post-war crisis he united us all, he cheered us all up, and he embodied the triumph of the human spirit," he (Johnson) said.

His efforts helped galvanise Britons, giving others hope and help at a time of need and uncertainty.¹⁸

- c. I too think what was achieved here was remarkable, and I am fascinated by how such a cause, in a dark and uncertain time can generate so much attention, affection and generosity. People caught the vision! I am amazed at what the human heart can do, will do, when the cause is so appealing, when it is important enough to us...

But even this cause, and the response generated, as awesome as this is/was, pales in comparison to... (*cross pic*)

7. HOW WE WORSHIP & WHY WE WORSHIP?

- a. We've seen the worship that poured out of Mary, despite her circumstances. She was a model worshipper!
 - i. **REFLECT:** *What 'pours' out of you...?* As a "cause" is God great and mighty and faithful and trustworthy enough for you to worship him? How do our souls glorify and our spirits rejoice?
 - ii. If you're saying this morning *"I really struggle to worship..."* your struggle is not with worship, **it is with knowing all who God is and a revelation of that...**

¹⁸ [Captain Sir Tom Moore dies after testing positive to coronavirus \(sbs.com.au\)](https://www.sbs.com.au/news/captain-sir-tom-moore-dies-after-testing-positive-to-coronavirus) 5th Feb 21

b. **Here's how and why we worship, God!**

i. **HOW?**

1. Know God
2. Know the truth of his word
3. Know his promises (see Vv. 49-55)
 - a. V. 49 He is *the Mighty One (who) has done great things for (you) — holy is his name.*
 - b. V. 50 *He is merciful...*
 - c. V. 55 *He keeps his promises...*
 - d. Vv. 51-55 *He is sovereign...*
4. Know I worship God on his terms

ii. **WHY?**

1. Because of our gratitude to God for his mercy and grace toward us in the person of Jesus and his work on the cross...
2. Because He asks us to! Rom. 12:1¹⁹
3. Because we so appreciate Jesus

8. Our souls glorify and our spirits rejoice when we are completely overwhelmed by the greatness of God. ***Only then, is Our Worship generated from a right understanding of God and Gods word and a deep appreciation of Jesus.***

¹⁹ Rom. 12:1. *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

1 Cor. 10:31. *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*