

Luke 1:39-56 (ESV) – Mary’s Magnificat

Main point: Make God large in your view!

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: This is the first of four ancient “advent hymns” from Luke’s gospel story of Jesus’ birth, according to Christian tradition:

1. Mary’s Magnificat
2. Zechariah’s blessing after the birth of his son, John the Baptist
3. the Angels’ “Gloria in excelsis”
4. Song of Simeon

Mary is now pregnant with the baby Jesus. *Let’s imagine what this must have been like; what are some realities of her situation?*

- scholars think she was probably about 13-14 years old
- engaged but not married
- from a poor area of low reputation (Nazareth)
- visited by an angel, which was scary!
- and now pregnant

The angel also tells her:

⁶And 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. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Mary accepts the message; I wonder who here knows what she said?

- v. 38: “I am the servant of the Lord.”

She then goes “with haste” to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is also pregnant, with the baby who will become John the Baptist:

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

Focus of study:

⁴⁶And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and 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,
and holy is his name.

Questions:

1. *“My soul magnifies the Lord” – what does “magnify” mean?*
 - a. to make large, make something big
 - b. to bring into focus, like a magnifying glass [Have a magnifying glass on hand if possible]
2. *What else does Mary do?*
 - a. v. 47: she rejoices in God
3. *Why does she magnify God and rejoice in God?*
 - a. v. 48: “he has looked on the humble estate of his servant” –*What does it mean that Mary is humble? What does it feel like to be humble?*
 - b. v. 48: *What promise does she have?*
 - i. “All generations will call me blessed...” And what are we doing right now, today?! Still talking about Mary and how special she was!
4. *I wonder how you feel when you know God is with you?*
 - a. loved
 - b. protected
 - c. amazed
 - d. glad, grateful
5. *When you magnify something, again, what happens?*
 - a. It gets BIGGER.
6. *What happens to everything outside the magnifying glass?*
 - a. They look SMALLER.
7. *When you magnify the Lord, what does that do to all the worries or fears you may have in your life?*
 - a. As God gets bigger, other concerns get smaller.
8. Remember Mary’s situation: humble, poor, a woman, unmarried, pregnant. What happened to those concerns when she magnified the Lord? Did they go away? (No.) Did they get smaller in her mind and heart so that they did not overwhelm her? (Yes!)

God cares about and loves you, and when you focus on him, other serious things look more manageable. Like Mary, he is with you!

9. Ask for prayer requests for today.
10. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
11. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace