

Mary's Song

Luke 1:39-55

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Blessed are those who believe in Jesus! Last sermon entitled “Go and Tell” we examined the song of Zachariah and in doing so stressed the importance of Christ’s ambassadors, i.e. us Christians, to go and tell the whole world the Good News that the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace has arrived! While we are aware of our obligation to proclaim Jesus’ name on his birthday, we often fail to do so either due to indifference, lack of courage or not knowing the “right” words to say. This sermon is going to address these issues by examining Mary’s Song from the Gospel of Luke. The first part of this sermon is going to look at Mary’s visit with Elizabeth (39-45) to help ignite our passion for the Babe lying in the manger who bought and reconciled us with a holy God. The second part (46-49) is going to strengthen our resolve to witness by reminding us that God chooses the weak and lowly to shame the strong. And lastly this sermon will finish (50-56) by stating the right words to say reflect the truth that those who humbly accept Christ as their Savior will be saved while those who are too proud in their inmost thoughts will be brought down from their “self-glorifying” thrones!

Blessed are Those who Believe (39-45)

Before Mary bursts out in her song Luke tells us how the pregnancies of both Mary and Elizabeth are intertwined to tell a singular story of God’s redemption.¹ In great faith² and obedience to the sign the angel gave her in 1:36³ Mary quickly (1:39) took a journey from Nazareth to an undisclosed city in Judah⁴ some seventy⁵ to one hundred miles away.⁶ When Mary arrived and greeted Elizabeth her baby leapt for joy fulfilling the prophesy that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit before birth (1:15-17)⁷ and would be a forerunner to the Messiah.⁸

¹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 92.

² D. A. Carson, “*The Gospels and Acts*,” in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2068.

³ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 64.

⁴ Craig A. Evans, *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 42.

⁵ Walter L. Liefeld, “*Luke*,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 834.

⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 64.

⁷ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 95.

⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Lk 1:29.



Despite being socially superior to Mary (a daughter of Aaron and wife of a priest) and her elder,⁹ Elizabeth not only humbly acknowledged Mary's superior role¹⁰ she "placed herself in the servants role bestowing honor on her guest whom she now recognized as the Mother of the Lord."¹¹ Elizabeth concluded by stating that Mary was blessed not only due to her being the "Mother" of He who would provide salvation to her people¹² but also due to the fact that she wholeheartedly believed God keeps His word and is the foundation of all life.¹³

Blessed are those who believe in Jesus on His birthday! Mary and Elizabeth were overwhelmed with joy for having been chosen to be part of God's salvation plan for this world! Jesus emptied Himself, lived and died to atone for our sins so that we might be reconciled unto a holy God (Philippians 2:8-9; John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:320). To transform these words from being mere knowledge to the bread of our lives we desperately need to go back to our first



love (James 1:22-25; Revelation 2:4). The moment you became a new creation the old was gone and the new had come (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)! Remember how you used to experience the Spirit leaping for joy when you sang songs about God, read the Bible, prayed, helped others and got to witness miracles? Until we can see the cross in the tree and see those dying in their sins as an eternal death sentence, we will not have enough passion to break free from complacency and proclaim the reason why we have hope in the Lord (Romans 6:23; 1 Peter 3:15)! To keep

from experiencing another commercial Christmas we ambassadors and royal priests need to ask the Potter to mold our carnal lukewarm hearts back into ones like Elizabeth and Mary who

⁹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 94.

¹⁰ Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 26.

¹¹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 94.

¹² Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 96.

¹³ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Lk 1:29.

leapt for joy at the mere mention of being part of Christ’s gracious salvation plan (1 Peter 2:9; Isaiah 64:8; Revelation 3:15-16))!

Glorifying God (46-49)

Mary responded to Elizabeth’s declaration that she had been blessed through a song known as the Magnificat¹⁴ which translated meant “to tell out the greatness of the Lord.”¹⁵



Upon deep reflection and silent prayer,¹⁶ steeped in Old Testament language¹⁷ and overtones to Hannah’s song,¹⁸ Mary sang evangelically¹⁹ and with great praise that the culmination of God’s mercy and grace²⁰ had fallen upon her a person of lowly social status!²¹ Mary brings her song with acknowledgement of sin,²² need for a Savior and utter dependence on Him!²³ As she pondered and meditated on witnessing of the glory “attributed of the Most High”²⁴ she was not concerned about the public humiliation of having a child out of wedlock²⁵ but of rightly

praising the Mighty One rightly for His greatness and mercy that extends from one generation to

¹⁴ Craig A. Evans, *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 42.

¹⁵ Walter L. Liefeld, “[Luke](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 835.

¹⁶ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹⁷ Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 92.

¹⁸ Walter L. Liefeld, “[Luke](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 835.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Mary’s Magnificat](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 51 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1905), 307.

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Mary’s Magnificat](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 51 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1905), 310.

²¹ Walter L. Liefeld, “[Luke](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 836.

²² Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 93.

²³ Walter L. Liefeld, “[Luke](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 835.

²⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Mary’s Magnificat](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 51 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1905), 308.

²⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Mary’s Magnificat](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 51 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1905), 310.

the next!²⁶ Contemplating the tender mercies of God²⁷ that is extended to those who fear Him²⁸ caused her heart to leap for joy that despite humanity's repeated opposition God had provided the means for His covenantal partner to be reconciled unto Him!²⁹

From the first part of Mary's song we learn that if we are to fulfill the Great Commission this Christmas we first need to glorify God within our own hearts! One simply cannot convince unbelievers of the value of the treasure or pearl that one has found in Christ Jesus without first



showing them evidence of one's own transformation and obedience (Matthew 13:44-46; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 5:3-5). Why would those who hate the Light and see the cross as mere foolishness give up their broad paths of pleasure and self-glorification to embrace a "humanly produced" narrow path of cheap grace and no fruit (John 3:20; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Matthew 7:13-14)? The soul glorifies and shines brightest by a regenerate, faithful and obedient heart that has denied the right to choose but instead humbly submits and points to the

will of God the Father in heaven (Matthew 16:24, 5:14-26). The peace and overwhelming joy of one who truly believes that their life is not their own but thirsts for God as their portion, such a

person becomes a living testimony that cannot be hid by a world that glorifies temporary pleasures that are here today and gone tomorrow (1 Peter 1:8; Psalms 73:26; 1 Peter 2:1-5; Matthew 6:19-21)!



Also, from the first part of Mary's song we learn that those who surrender and are willing to serve with a humble heart make the best Gospel witnesses at Christmas. Looking at the lost of this world with condescending, self-justified eyes of incrimination will not convince

²⁶ Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 93.

²⁷ Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 92.

²⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 66.

²⁹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 103–104.

the lost to give up their temporary pleasures but merely reinforce the hypocrisy found in lukewarm, carnal Christians. We ambassadors and priests are not superior to the lost based on our works but through faith in the atonement and blood of a Savior who “constantly cleanses us from all our sin!” (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16)³⁰ This world needs to know that like the thief on the cross and the publican our and ultimately their hope lies in the mercy of God who desires that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9; Luke 18:9-14)!³¹ Even though none of us are worthy to untie the sandals of Jesus’ feet He still chooses us the weak this Christmas to humbly shame the strong of this world not because He wants to condemn but to offer them salvation through His Son Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:27-31; John 3:17)!

Helping the World to Remember Rightly (50-55)

No longer directed at Mary³² the second part of the song focuses on how the coming of the



Messiah ushers in a kingdom of “radical social reversals.”³³ The Messiah would usher in a new covenant in His blood that fulfilled God’s promise to show mercy unto Abraham and his descendants,³⁴ both Jews and Gentiles.³⁵ God’s mercy would “express itself in power, redemption and justice.”³⁶ Out of His self-giving nature³⁷ God deals with humanity not based on one’s earthly possessions but on the attitude of one’s heart!³⁸ For those who humbly submit and serve

³⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Mary’s Magnificat](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 51 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1905), 308.

³¹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Mary’s Magnificat](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 51 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1905), 308.

³² Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 104.

³³ Walter L. Liefeld, “[Luke](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 836.

³⁴ Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 94.

³⁵ Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 27.

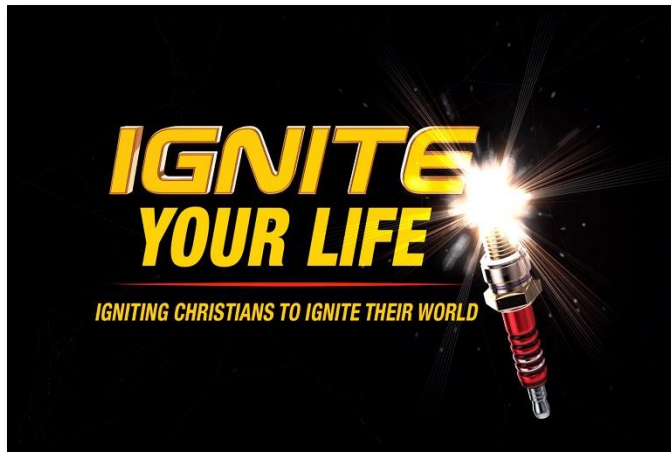
³⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 66.

³⁷ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 105.

³⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 71.

Him reverently³⁹ they will experience God's hese⁴⁰ justice, mercy and have their lowly status changed to "blessed" in His kingdom.⁴¹ "For those who stand in opposition to God they will face His power and authority to bring down"⁴² their arrogant self-reliance⁴³ and send them away empty!⁴⁴ God truly opposes any structure that perpetuates a person's value based on power and money rather than faith in Him!⁴⁵

Our role as Christ's ambassadors and royal priests is to help the world remember rightly concerning the birth of our Lord, Savior and King. The right words to say to a fallen world must point to that fact that Jesus who was born over 2,000 years ago ushered in a kingdom of mercy,



hope and justice. Tell the lost of this world that no matter how sinful and depraved their hearts have become they need only to confess and surrender their hearts to be lifted and adopted as a redeemed masterpiece of His grace! To help convince the lost to accept God's gracious gift of salvation show them how profoundly God has enriched and transformed your life. Finally, don't try and "water down or sugar coat" God's offer, tell them the truth that if they reject God in this life

God will reject them for an eternity. Of course, say and do these things with much prayer, basked in love and humility. May this quote from Charles Spurgeon be our heart's desire this Christmas:

"May some poor soul here, that has not anything for which it could praise itself, begin now to praise that God who freely forgives the greatest sin, and who is willing to cleanse the very blackest sinner, for he has given Christ to die, the Just for the unjust, that he may bring them unto God."⁴⁶

³⁹ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 71.

⁴⁰ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Lk 1:50.

⁴¹ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Lk 1:50.

⁴² Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Lk 1:50.

⁴³ Leon Morris, [Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 93–94.

⁴⁴ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 104.

⁴⁵ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 105.

⁴⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, "[Mary's Magnificat](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 51 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1905), 311.

