

SING OF GOD'S BLESSING
SECOND WED IN ADVENT

LUKE 1:46-55
DEC 10, 2014

⁴⁶ And 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.
⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

What makes Mary magnify the Lord
is something like what makes a balloon enlarge.
it is because of both the lower pressure on the outside
and the greater pressure on the inside.
The greater the difference, the larger the balloon.
With Mary, we praise and magnify God because of both
his greatness and worthiness and also
because of our neediness and unworthiness
and because of what God does for us in spite of difference.
The greater the difference, the more the praise.
So as we look at another of the Biblical songs of the Savior,
we too sing of God's blessings

WE SING THE GREATNESS OF OUR NEED
WE SING THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S MIGHT
WE SING THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S MERCY

WE SING THE GREATNESS OF OUR NEED

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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;

One of most popular secular Christmas songs of all time...
is Blue Christmas, sung by Elvis Presley
Maybe, like me you wonder why some people seem to like
sad, depressing songs, especially at Christmas.
Isn't it because they express how they themselves feel.
Mary's song starts with expressing this feeling about herself.
She sees her humble state.
She sees herself as lowly and needy
Not just physically but spiritually.
She knows she needs a Savior from her sins
and this is why she bursts out in joy
over the fact that she has one.
She doesn't say words of text immediately after angel tells her
she will be mother of Jesus, but when she meets
cousin Elizabeth who recognizes her as mother of Lord.
Maybe you know how it is when feelings inside you
start overflowing when you start talking about things.
This is time of year when feelings overflow both good and bad.
We think of it as joyful time of year
but that can make it all the harder for those
who are down and low because of grief and losses,
sickness & disease, job setbacks, financial problems,
broken relationships or depression.
What better time to join in the song of Mary
about a Savior who looks on the humble state of his servant.
But Mary's song makes a change of tune.
She says things will change from now on.
All generations will call her blessed.
Why is that?

WE SING THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S MIGHT

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and holy is his name.

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he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

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Someone once pointed out: only the small birds sing.
Big powerful birds like eagles, swans and others
screech and squawk and honk, but don't sing.

Point of the observation is not so much about birds as people.

Big powerful people may not feel reason to sing God's praise
as much as the little ones he provides for & protects.

Mary observes that the proud and the mighty

who may think they can take care of themselves
are brought down from their high seats and scattered.

God is more mighty. Everything that seems to be secure
actually depends on him to hold it up.

Today, as in the past, there are those who have
political power, military power, the power of money,
or just the power to pull strings at work
and it seems they get away with anything they want
and there is nothing we can do about it.

But scripture and history both show that they can still fall
so often, in the end, and even secretly beforehand,
they are broken and empty, hollow shells
because God is the one who is really in control.

Meanwhile, the one who is mighty does great things for me.

Even in the midst of troubles he provides good things.

He exalts those who are low.

When we recognize that we ourselves are actually
among those who are proud and self righteous
he forgives us and changes us.

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled,
and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

He exalts us by calling making us children of the Heavenly king,
by giving us joy by his presence and love even in suffering,
by raising us up even from the dead to himself in heaven.

Why does God, who is so mighty, do such good things
for people like us who are so lowly and undeserving?

It is all because of his mercy.

WE SING THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S MERCY

⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

God remembers his promises of mercy to our ancestors.

He remembers the plan he had before foundation of world

to send his son to be our savior
because he knew beforehand that we would sin.
He remembers how he used his great might
to guide the whole course of history
to use the weak, undeserving descendants of Abraham
to be the human family of Jesus
who humbled himself to be the lowliest one of us
and die on cross, seeming to be overcome by the powerful
yet by this very act to overthrow all the power
of sin that traps us, the devil who tricks us
and death that overwhelms us
and fill us instead with his own goodness.
He reminds Mary of his mercy with his words to her.
He reminds us of his mercy with her words here.
He reminds us of his mercy each day we hear & read his word,
each time we receive the absolution, think of our Baptism,
receive Jesus' body & blood in Holy Communion,
each time we tell someone else of his love for them.

Here, when Mary has been reminded of what God has done,
a song comes bursting out of her heart
like a child comes from a pregnant woman.
This Advent season is our time of spiritual pregnancy
as God fills us with joy that forms in us
until it comes bursting out at Christmas.

WE SING THE GREATNESS OF OUR NEED

We start with the sad song of our troubles
and how lowly and undeserving we are
because we recognize our sin.

WE SING THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S MIGHT

We praise him for his sovereign control of those
who seem and who consider themselves powerful
and his ability to bring down the proud - including us,
demonstrating our need for his grace.

WE SING THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S MERCY

Because he uses his power to help us
instead of punishing us as we deserve.
Jesus humbles himself to be our savior
in order to exalt us as his own dear children
who rejoice in his love despite every trouble in this life
and eagerly look forward to being lifted up to heaven.