

Mary's Magnificat: Rejoicing in God our Saviour

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Preacher: Paul Brennan

[0 : 00] Well, good afternoon to you and very warm welcome to our lunchtime carol service here. This lunchtime, you're very welcome, particularly if it's your first time with us, you're very welcome indeed.

Well, let's begin, shall we, with our first carol, and it's a carol that speaks of the eternal God, the source of life, stepping down into the world as a babe, the saviour of our race. So let's sing, it's on the screens for us, of the Father's love begotten, the world's began to be. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[1 : 30] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. This is your word, dear door, date, God Marshes ay what I give and the rivers upon the water, Stair the EDUCING FLAIN number nine, appreciation for me in the bardzo possible mountains of the water, Bible Sprouse Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[4 : 24] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. And Mary said, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[6 : 20] Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, we sing again, and we sing now of that day which was foretold by the angel, that day when the child Jesus was born.

It came upon the night was born, it came upon the night clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold, peace on earth, goodwill to men, from heaven's all-gracious king.

And let's sing together. And let's sing together. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

[8 : 06] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[10 : 36] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Amen.

[13 : 06] May God bless to us his word. And we'll be thinking about this in a moment after we sing our next carol. Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight. Let's sing, let's sing, let's sing together.

Let's sing together. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[16 : 54] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Well, that speaks, as the Magnificat. And it's known as that because of the opening words, my soul magnifies the Lord.

And it's a song full of overwhelming joy. It's a joyful song, isn't it? But it's not rejoicing about what we would expect. We would expect Mary to be full of rejoicing about the miraculous baby now growing in her womb. But that's not it. Never once in all the Magnificat does she mention the fact that she is going to be the mother of the Son of God. No. Rather, the Magnificat is packed full of rejoicing about what God has done, what he is doing, and what he will do. It's all about God the Savior. And that is why this song has enduring relevance. It's not so much about one mother's joy at a miraculous baby. Rather, it's her joy at what God has done for all the world. It is a song that is deeply relevant for all people everywhere at all times, and even for you here this afternoon.

[20 : 36] So in these few moments, we'll look at this song. And three things to see in this song.

First, we see in Mary's song, overwhelming joy because of God's present mercy for those who fear him.

So we're looking at verses 46 to 50 here. And as I said, this is a song of overwhelming joy. And Mary begins with praise for God. Her spirit rejoices in God my Savior. That is, she's filled with great joy, exultant, overwhelming joy. But why such joy?

Well, it's because in the events that are happening here, and particularly with her miraculous pregnancy, God is acting as her Savior. That's what she says, isn't it? Look at verse 47. God is, through what he is doing, bringing about not just motherhood, but salvation. And it's not just for Mary, is it? Look on to the next couple of verses. She's aware that there is something bigger going on here. She says, all generations will call me blessed. It's a strange thing to say, isn't it? Why is that the case?

Well, look at the next sentence. All generations will call me blessed for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. Now, we might expect her to say, all generations will call me blessed because I am to be the mother of the Son of God. But that's not what she says.

Her focus is on what God is doing, not so much what's happening to her. And what God is doing is bringing about, through this miraculous birth, he's bringing the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the one who would rescue and bring salvation. And he would bring salvation, not just for Mary, but for all generations. His mercy, look at verse 50. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. This is the crucial thing we must see in the events of Christmas. We can't miss this. In all this, in this miraculous birth that we've been thinking about on these Wednesday lunchtimes, in all this, God was working in order to bring about his great rescue plan.

[23 : 03] And he was doing it in and through the baby to be born to Mary. God was acting as Savior in these events. And Mary saw that. She saw what was really going on. And we must see it too. We must see God as our Savior. For we need rescue from our plight. The Bible tells us that we are dead in sin.

We are by nature subject to the judgment of a holy God. We need rescue. We need a Savior. And that alone is the path to true and lasting joy for you and me. That alone is the path to singing such a joyful song as this. As one of the great reformers of the 16th century wrote, till God has been recognized as a Savior, the minds of men are not free to indulge in true and full joy, but will remain in doubt and anxiety. It is God's fatherly kindness alone and the salvation that flows from it that will fill the soul with joy. In a word, the first thing necessary for believers is to be able to rejoice that they have their salvation in God. So if you are a believer here this afternoon, then rejoice. Christmas is a time to rejoice because of all that God has done for you as Savior. But if you are not a believer, then I must appeal to you this afternoon that you must receive God as Savior because there is no other. It is only in knowing God as your Savior that true joy and lasting peace is to be found nowhere else. So will you fear him? Will you fear him? That is, will you submit your life to him because he is the almighty God? He is your creator and judge.

But he's also in the person of Jesus Christ come as Savior. Just listen to those words from Mary again in verse 50. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. This wasn't just for Mary or her immediate family or those living at that time. No, it's for generation to generation even until today.

Through this child born to Mary, through Jesus, God reaches down as Savior. He offers forgiveness of sin and everlasting life to all who will call on him, all who will fear him.

[25 : 41] So will you receive his mercy? That's the first thing we see in Mary's song, overwhelming joy because of God's present mercy for those who fear him.

But second, look on to verses 51 to 53. We see secondly in Mary's song, overwhelming joy because of God's future hope for the humble. Remember that at this point, the baby Jesus is a tiny fetus in Mary's womb.

And yet, she's able to speak as if all these things have already happened. Look at what she says there in verse 51. He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones. It's all in the past tense, isn't it? But these things are yet to happen for Mary.

In fact, they are yet to happen for us too, aren't they? We're still waiting for these things to come. They speak of a perfect world, a transformed world, a world where truth and justice reign, a world with no Brexit, a world with no more sadness or tears or death.

[26 : 57] It's a world that seems almost too good to be true. It's a world that seems out of reach, but which we all long for.

It is a world that the Bible promises will be one day. It will be. But Mary here is speaking as if it is already here.

She was, as one writer put it, she was speaking just like the prophets of old did. They would speak in the past tense because the word of God they proclaimed was so certain that it was as though it was already accomplished.

So certain. And Mary here is saying that all these things, they are as good as done with the coming birth of her son.

The coming of Jesus and all that he did wasn't, as some like to think of it, some sort of political revolution. It was much bigger than that. His coming, it was a cosmic revolution.

[27 : 58] He was bringing in a whole new world, a transformed world, which will come to fruition when he returns. And it will be an everlasting new world.

That is the great hope of Christmas. That is why we can sing in one of the most well-known carols of the season. That's why we can sing, hail the heaven-born prince of peace.

Hail the son of righteousness. Light and life to all he brings. Risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by. Born that man no more may die.

Born to raise the sons of earth. Born to give them second birth. Hark the heralds. Angels sing glory to the newborn king. That is the great future that Mary speaks of here with such certainty.

So certain because of who speaks it and for what is going to happen as the baby Jesus grows, as he accomplishes all that he set out to do with his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his reign, and his coming return.

[29 : 07] That is the great perspective that Mary has here. So we see in this song of Mary, first, overwhelming joy because of God's present mercy for those who fear him.

Second, overwhelming joy because of God's future hope for the humble. But thirdly, we see in Mary's song, overwhelming joy because of God's past promises are now fulfilled.

This is verses 54 and 55. These last two verses of the song, they set the events of the first nativity in the wider context of the whole sweep of history.

And the significance, the meaning of the birth of Jesus is laid bare. And the scope is just breathtaking. Mary sings these words.

Mary is recalling the greatest promise in the whole Bible, which can be found right back in Genesis, the first book of the Bible to the earliest chapters, which recount the creation of the world and of the first human beings, Adam and Eve, and how they lived in a perfect world, in perfect relationship with each other and with God.

[30 : 39] But sin entered the world. Man disobeyed God's good command, choosing instead to listen to the great enemy, the serpent, Satan himself.

And so man was banished from God's perfect garden and destined to a life of decay, difficulty, and ultimately death.

But even then, even in that moment of greatest darkness, there was a glimmer of light. A promise was made to Adam and Eve that one day, one of their offspring would come and destroy Satan, the great enemy.

One of their offspring would come and make it possible for man to enjoy again a perfect world with God. And the Bible charts the outworking of that foundational promise through Abraham, through his offspring down, through the generations to the offspring, to the offspring that was now growing in Mary's womb.

That is the great reality that Mary sings of here. As one of the older preachers from Scotland once said, she had a grasp of the entire meaning of her people's history and of the fact that her birth to be of her son, that in that, the promise made to Abraham, even to Adam and Eve, was fulfilled.

[32 : 08] And the seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent, and all the woe of the world healed. That is what Mary was grasping when she uttered these words.

You see, this wasn't just an event central to the history and people of Israel. It has to do with all people. The coming of Jesus into the world to defeat Satan, to crush his head, is central to all of history and ultimately of relevance to all people.

For it's only in Jesus that our greatest needs are met. Only in him forgiveness of sin for which we're all guilty is found.

Only in him is everlasting life found. Only in him are our longings for justice, goodness, peace. Only in him are they found.

That is why Mary bursts forth with this song. This is a long-awaited child. This is the fulfillment of that great promise of God to once and for all defeat Satan.

[33 : 18] At last, in this child, the promised Savior has come. And that is why millions, even billions, across the world will sing in these coming days.

Joy to the world. The Lord has come. Let earth receive her king. Let every heart prepare him room. So will your heart prepare him room this Christmas?

Will you receive him as your king, as your savior? Will you join your voice to Mary's? And with many Christians across the globe and rejoice in God our savior?

Will you enjoy his present mercy? Will you know that future hope all because he has fulfilled all his past promises?

That is what we see in the birth of Jesus Christ and in Mary's song. Well, before we sing our final carry, let me pray. Let me pray. Let me pray. Let me pray. Father God, we thank you for all the great joy that we know at this time of year.

[34 : 41] It's all around us. The bright lights, the giving and receiving of gifts, the coming together of family and friends, the songs we so much enjoy to sing.

But Lord, would you help us not to miss the greatest joy at the very heart of it all? And would you help us to join our voices to Mary's and to be able to sing of God our Savior?

So Lord, help us, each of us here this afternoon, to prepare in our hearts room for the Lord Jesus Christ. So help us, we ask in his name. Amen.

Well, let's close our service now with the carol I was quoting from just towards the end there. Joy to the world. The Lord has come.

Let earth receive her king. Let every heart prepare him room. Let's sing together. God bless the earth.

[35 : 56] Remember I shall take and shall be heard the sol cannot const masc MixanaSEwww.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[38 : 08] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

And have a read of that. So, please do make use of these. We've got 250 of these around the place, so we want them to be used. So, please do take one of those as you head out. But thank you very much for coming, and let me pray as we close.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

Amen.