

CHRISTMAS

"GREATNESS"

Luke 1:46



WHY IT'S EASY TO MAGNIFY GOD

- ◆ Great Salvation
- ◆ Great Grace
- ◆ Great Mercy

"Mary responded, "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord." (Luke 1:46)

Bill Kirk

CHRISTMAS GREATNESS

Text: Luke 1:46

Subject: Why it's Easy to Magnify God

Introduction

(Our Text Has an Incredible Context)

Question: What is the setting?

Answer: It is the birth of two babies.

1. In V. 11, the angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias to announce the birth of John the Baptist.
2. In V. 28, Gabriel appears to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus.

Question: What's the big deal about the order of these two announcements?

Answer: The big deal is, God visits Elizabeth first with a miracle to encourage Mary about her miracle.

Question: Who were Zacharias and Elizabeth? The parents of John the Baptist.

1. They were spiritual
(V.6) "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." (In other words)
 - ♦ They sought to please the Lord and lived in a way that no one could charge them with open sin.
2. They were sad
(V.7) "And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren and they both were now well stricken in years. (In other words)
 - ♦ They were childless which was like a curse in that day, because a Jew whose wife could not bear children was thought to be cut off from God.
3. They were steadfast
(V.8) "And it came to pass that Zacharias was executing the priests office before God." (In other words)
 - ♦ While Zacharias is sad and hurting and in pain for his wife, he doesn't get bitter against God.

Instead

- ♦ He continues to be faithful to God and burn incense upon the altar.
4. They were surprised
(V. 13) "But the angel said to Zacharias, fear not, for thy prayer is heard and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son." (In other words)
 - ♦ While Zacharias was praying in V. 10, just like he had been praying every other day for years.
 - ♦ In V. 11, the angel appears and announces the answer is on the way.
 - ♦ And in V. 24, his wife Elizabeth conceives.

Some of you are in Luke 1

- ♦ You are living to please the Lord so that no one will stumble because of your lifestyle.

- ♦ Some of you have been sad, you have grieved and cried like Zacharias, because of the pain you feel for another family member.
- ♦ Some of you have overcome the temptation to get bitter against God, because His timetable has been different from your time tables.
- ♦ Some of you are about to be surprised, by an unexpected answer to prayer, because you prayed and refused to ever give up in the place of prayer.

Question: Why does all of this take place when Jesus is about to be born?

Answer: Because Mary is human just like you and me.

- ♦ In V. 31, Gabriel says, "Mary, you will conceive."
- ♦ In V. 34, Mary says, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"
- ♦ In V. 36, "Your cousin Elizabeth; God did a miracle in her old age and the same God will perform a miracle in you."

In Other Words

V. 37 "For with God, nothing shall be impossible."

Question: How many of you believe that with God, nothing shall be impossible?

Question: How many of you believe that if God could answer Elizabeth's prayer, God can answer your prayers?

Question: What did Mary say when the angel announced "Mary, you will give birth to the Son of God and you need to go see your cousin Elizabeth?"

Answer: (V.38), "And Mary said, behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy Word."

Question: How did Mary respond to the angel's call?

V. 38, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord."

- ♦ The word "handmaid" is Greek word (DOULE) which means "slave or servant".
- ♦ A servant is one who advances others at the expense of themselves, has submitted their rights to God and is at the total disposal of their master.

Question: What did Mary do after she said with her mouth "Be it unto me Lord, according to Your word"?

Answer: V.39 "And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste."

Question: Why is this so significant?

Because

1. Mary would be an unwed mother, and who would believe her story?
2. Mary would have to face Joseph and deal with his shock and rejection of a broken trust.
3. Mary would face the threat of being stoned to death for committing adultery.

In Other Words

- ♦ After Mary submitted to the Lord's will, she chose to obey God regardless of the consequences.

Now our text in V. 46

"My soul does **magnify** the Lord"

- ♦ The word "**magnify**" (MEGALUNEI) means: "**to declare the greatness of**"
- ♦ The idea is habitual.

In Other Words

Mary keeps on magnifying the Lord

Question: The question is, what causes Mary to magnify the Lord (and)

- ♦ What causes you and me to magnify the Lord this Christmas Sunday?
- ♦ Why do you have a right to rejoice today?
- ♦ Why do you have a privilege to declare the greatness of God today?
- ♦ What's the root cause of all the singing, lights, flowers and joy surrounding this celebration called Christmas?
- ♦ Why is Christmas 'Christmas' and such a big deal to you personally?

Why magnify God and declare His greatness with joy today?

1. You can rejoice in God's Salvation (V. 47)

V. 47, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."

Question: Why magnify God like Mary magnified God?

Answer: Because just as Mary was saved by grace, so you and I are saved by grace.

In Other Words

- ♦ Mary recognized she was a sinner and could not save herself.
- ♦ Mary recognized she would give birth to the Savior.
- ♦ So Mary magnifies God and rejoices by saying "God is providing my salvation."

In Other Words

- ♦ God has seen me, a sinner; Christmas means God has provided me a Savior.

In Other Words

- ♦ Christmas is Christmas because of the Savior.
- ♦ Christmas is Christmas because of our salvation.
- ♦ Christmas is Christmas because of the sacrifice God has made to save us from our sins.

2. You can rejoice in God's Grace today. (V. 48)

(V. 48) "For God has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden."

Question: What was Mary's low estate?

Answer: She was considered the least within her own household:
♦ Poor ♦ Obscure ♦ Unknown ♦ Undeserving

Question: Why did God record Mary's words, "God has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden"? (Why is it in your Bible?)

Answer: So that you and I would remember the low estate where we've come from.
♦ So we would remember and keep it before us, just how far down we were when God saved us.

Question: How low were we?

Romans 5:8

"But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

I Peter 3:18

"For Christ also has suffered for sins, the just for the unjust."

Ephesians 2:8

"For by grace are you saved through faith, and not of yourselves."

Question: How many of you can magnify God for His grace?

3. You can rejoice in God's Power (V. 49)

(V. 49) "For He is mighty, has done great things to me and holy is His name."

Question: How does this verse make you joyful?

- ♦ You recognize God's power and ability in the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary (and)
- ♦ "Holy is His name" means that God is pure and holy and without fault or mistake.

In Other Words

- ♦ If God could plant His Son in the womb of Mary, then surely God can work a miracle in your life (and)
- ♦ If God is holy and pure and without fault, then surely you can trust Him with the things you cannot understand.
- ♦ His might produces faith in your heart; His holiness produces rest in your heart.

So magnify God on Christmas Sunday because God is supernatural, God is all wise and you are the object of His attention.

4. You can rejoice in God's Mercy (V.50)

(V.50) "His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation."

Question: Why is Mary so joyful?

Answer: She recognizes the Savior is coming because of God's mercy #1 and, #2, that same mercy has been extended to everyone who honors God from generation to generation.

In Other Words

- ♦ We are here today because of God's mercy!
- ♦ We have been forgiven because of God's mercy!
- ♦ We obtained eternal life because of God's mercy!

Question: Who does God favor and shower with mercy?

Answer: Those who fear Him, or take God seriously in every area of their life.

Lamentations 3:22

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

Psalms 108:4

"For Thy mercy is great above the heavens."

5. You can rejoice in God's Justice (Vs. 51, 52)

"God has scattered the proud, put down the mighty and exalted those of low degree."

Question: What is God showing Mary here?

Answer: Something that enables you to take heart when you are treated unjustly:

#1. (V.51) "The Lord scatters the proud."

#2. (V.52) "The Lord puts down the mighty."

What's it mean? It means:

Christmas brings a Savior who deals with the proud and renders justice accordingly.

In Other Words

- ◆ No need to carry the pain of bitterness or unforgiveness.
- ◆ No need to plan and scheme to get even.
- ◆ No need to worry if they'll get away with hurting you.
- ◆ No need to take matters into your own hands.

Why not?

- ◆ Because God (in Christ) will bring it to light and render justice in due time.

6. You can rejoice in God's Supply (V.53)

"God has filled the hungry with good things."

Question: Who are the hungry?

Answer: The hungry are those in pursuit of God.

Question: What is their reward? ("Good things")

Question: What are the good things?

Answer: The good things are everything we need to enjoy our walk with God in this life.

Romans 14:17

"For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Question: What does God fill the hungry with?

- Righteousness - or right standing before God.
- Peace – or inward tranquility of Spirit.
- Joy – or gladness of heart because of pursuing God in all things.
- The Christ child will fill and fill the hungry.

7. You can rejoice in God's Liberty (V.54)

"He has helped His servant Israel."

Answer: Israel was enslaved by the Romans and needed liberation and deliverance.

- ◆ Israel was frantic in their search for liberty (in the promised Messiah).
- ◆ And Mary testifies that Jesus would liberate those who turn to Him.

II Corinthians 3:17

"Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

In Other Words

- ◆ Christmas means Jesus is the liberator, and Jesus breaks the power of cancelled sin.
- ◆ Jesus frees us from the strongholds of evil.
- ◆ Jesus saves us from present destruction and future punishment.
- ◆ Jesus pours out His Spirit and gives power for living.

That's why we sing

"O come all ye faithful, joyful and **triumphant**."

Bill Kirk