

December 13, 2020

Sermon Title: "Courage to Sing in a Season of Crisis"

Biblical Passage: Luke 1:46-55

Passage Background and Summary

(The Song of Mary)

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

This song is often called the Magnificat, the first word in the Latin translation of this passage. Mary's song has often been used as the basis for choral music and hymns. Mary glorified God in song for what he was going to do for the world through her. In the song God is pictured as a champion of the poor, the oppressed and the despised.

When Mary said, "From now on all generations will call me blessed," she was recognizing and accepting the gift God had given her. God kept his promise to Abraham to be merciful to God's people forever. Christ's birth fulfilled that promise and Mary understood this.

Sermon Points

This is the third Sunday of Advent, and Christmas is right around the corner. This is the season to sing. Here we are in the joyful season of Christmas. In this season we reflect on an early Christmas carol, the song of Mary (the Magnificat). In this song Mary dares to sing. At this time it is remarkable that with so much going on in her life, Mary chooses to sing. One would think that Mary would seem to be discombobulated with issues of shame, social stigma when put in an involuntary assignment to be the mother of the baby Jesus. Still Mary has the faith and courage to sing while sorrow looms about.

We see Christmas as such a joyful time. However, we should consider the young teenager Mary with so many issues with which to contend. She lived in a time when all babies under two years

old were ordered to be killed. She was unwed, pregnant and looked down upon. Mary's fiancée doubted her and their marriage faced grim repercussions. She was an unwed mother with a myriad trouble giving birth to the Son of God in the filth of a barn. Still, Mary sings "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior".

Mary's ability to sing tells the greatness of her soul as it declares the greatness of God. As we see the example of Mary, we must realize the essence of our soul's individual ability to experience the greatness of God. Our soul gives us the vehicle to connect and our spirit the access to rejoice in God and to sing in a season of crisis.

As we hold a personal connection to God we must remember the goodness of the Lord.

Reflection Questions

Reflecting on Mary's courage to keep a song in her heart and to rejoice in the word of God we allow ourselves to recognize the troubling times she faced. When we reflect on our own lives we too have troubles to contend with. We are in the midst of a pandemic, economic strife and live in an uncertain political upheaval. While our story is different than Mary's we too have courage to sing in a season of crisis.

1. How / why does Mary rejoice?
2. Talk about the greatness of God and in creation.
3. How can you sing in the midst of trouble?
4. What gives you the courage to sing?
5. Reflecting on the world issues of today, how can you be joyful during this Advent season?
6. What is the difference between your soul and your spirit?