

**The Magnificat**  
**Luke 1:39-56**  
**Pastor John Miller**

I'm going to read Luke 1:39-40. It says, "Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted..."—or "saluted" her cousin—"...Elizabeth."

We can only try to imagine the emotions that were racing through Mary's heart and mind after the visitation and the annunciation of the angel Gabriel that she was to be the mother of Messiah; that through her, the Savior of the world would be born. What a joy it must have brought to her heart. Actually, the emotions were probably fear and joy.

When we share our joy, it doubles it. Have you ever noticed that? Have you ever had something good happen to you? What do you want to do? You want to share it. You want to tell somebody.

So Mary had this overflowing joy. And by the way, I don't want to focus on it, but I don't want you to miss this: Joy runs through this whole passage. It's all about joy. Christmas is about joy; the joy the Savior brings. That's the response that Mary has to the coming of the Messiah. She has joy and a song in her heart.

Luke tells us that after the annunciation to Mary, she had received the assurance, Luke 1:36-38, that her "cousin, Elizabeth...hath...conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.' And the angel departed from her."

And guess what she did? She packed her bags right away. She took off for "the hill country" of Judea, verse 39, and she went to see her cousin Elizabeth. Why did Mary leave Nazareth and journey 80 miles? She's a young, teenage girl. She had just been told that she would "conceive in her womb by the work of the Holy Spirit." Why would she go to see her cousin Elizabeth? Number one, because the angel told her so as to confirm the word given to her that Elizabeth was in the sixth month of her pregnancy. So no doubt, she's going to go check it out. She believes the message and is submitted to God's plan for her life. It would also comfort her to check it out. How's she going to tell mom and dad that she's pregnant? How's she going to tell Joseph, who she is engaged to be married to, that she's expecting a child? This is going to be difficult doing the will of God in obedience to the will of God. Mary was going to pay a very heavy price for that. So she needed not only confirmation; she needed comfort and encouragement.

So this young, teenage girl took this 80-mile trip from Nazareth in the north of Galilee all the way down through Samaria into Judea and into the hill country. The text doesn't tell us what city in Judea she went to. Some believe it was Hebron, but we don't know. The Bible doesn't

say. When the Bible doesn't say, we don't know; we're just guessing. So somewhere in the hill country outside of Judea where Zacharias and Elizabeth lived, Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth.

I love the concept of these two pregnant women in contrast. One was very old and one was very young. One was beyond the age of bearing children, and one was just in the flower of her youth. God was going to use these two women; one to bring the forerunner of Messiah, John the Baptist, and the other to bring the Savior of the world. Elizabeth's son, John, would point to the child of Mary and say, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who carries away the sins of the world."

So Mary, a peasant girl, a teenage girl, leaves Nazareth and journeys. By the way, I'm reading in the "white spaces" of the Bible and wondering, whom did she travel with? How did she travel? The journey would have taken at least three days. Some say four days. People would travel in caravans for safety. There was safety in numbers. She couldn't just pack her lunch and get on her donkey and take off 80 miles to visit Elizabeth. "Ding dong, I'm here!"

Mary spends three months with Elizabeth. It's Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy. Mary stays three months, and she stays up to the birth of John the Baptist. Whether she was there for the birth, we don't know. There is a lot left out in this beautiful narrative. When we get to heaven, we're going to ask Mary and Elizabeth to fill us in on the details. "What did you talk about late into the night?"

Can you imagine these two pregnant women talking? They're both expecting, and they're both excited and talking. It's a miracle for both of them. They probably stayed up late talking and were so excited about what God was doing. I believe Elizabeth would bring great comfort and confirmation to the heart of Mary. And Mary would bring great encouragement and comfort to the heart of Elizabeth. I can only imagine the conversation these two women had late at night for those three months during Elizabeth's pregnancy. Mary now is pregnant in the early stages and has the Savior of the world tabernacling in her womb. So it's an amazing setting in verses 39-40.

I love what R. Kent Hughes says about the meeting of these two women. He said, "There was a strong, human joy in the meeting of these two expectant mothers. One in the flower of youth; the other, the bloom long gone. These two were to become innocent coconspirators, soul sisters in the divine plot to save the lost. They would share their hearts as few humans ever, ever have. Through their birthing pain, sweat, blood and their mothering too, the world would receive its greatest blessings." What an awesome thought. What a contrast between Elizabeth and Mary as they share what God has done in their lives.

From verse 41 to 45, we have Elizabeth's prophecy, and from verses 46 to 56 we have Mary's praise. We first have Elizabeth praising Mary, and then we have Mary praising God.

In verses 41-45 it says, "And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary..." So Mary shows up on the step, she rings the doorbell, Elizabeth opens the door and she greets

her. When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, "...the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." So the child leaping is John the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth. And then it says that John, not Elizabeth, was "filled with the Holy Spirit."

Whenever you find people filled with the Holy Spirit in the Bible, their mouth is always opened in praise or proclamation. Either they're praising the Lord or proclaiming the Lord. That's what the Holy Spirit does for us.

"Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.' So John the Baptist actually heard Mary's salutation, and he started jumping up and praising. I told you he was the Pentecostal. "Hallelujah!" He jumps up in the mother's womb. That's pretty exciting. Everybody's filled with joy; even the baby who's jumping in Elizabeth's womb. Then Elizabeth says, "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

So Elizabeth hears the greeting of Mary, and the minute she hears that greeting—I wonder how much Elizabeth knew. I think it was very little. When she pronounced her prophetic word—by the way, this is the first prophetic utterance since Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. The Old Testament ends with Malachi. There were 400 years of silence broken by Gabriel's annunciation to Elizabeth and Mary. Now the prophetic voice speaks. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth prophesies. She pronounces this blessing upon Mary. How much did she know? I believe this was given to her by the Holy Spirit.

Here again, we see the hand of God on this narrative. This simple story is simply supernatural. God's fingerprint is all the way through it. I don't believe Elizabeth knew anything, other than confirmation when she felt her child leap for joy when she heard the salutation of Mary.

Then Elizabeth pronounced these beatitudes: "Blessed are you among women..." Not "blessed over women," but "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" Then Elizabeth uses the phrase "the mother of my Lord." The word Lord is "Kurios." "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" She doesn't say "the mother of God"; she says "the mother of my Lord." I believe that Elizabeth is referring to the fact that Mary is the mother of Messiah. That's the way most Bible scholars think that should be viewed, and I agree. She's saying "the mother of Messiah." "You're the one who is bearing the Messiah, the Lord, the Savior of the world." In the Old Testament, this word "Lord" would be used of "Jehovah" or "Yahweh." She would say, "How is it that the mother of my Messiah, my Lord, should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy." There's that Christmas joy: John filled with joy, Elizabeth filled with joy and Mary will be filled with joy and overflow in her song.

In verse 45, again Mary confirms that she believed God's word to her. It says, "Blessed is she who believed." Could this be in contrast to Elizabeth's understanding of her husband,

Zacharias, who didn't believe? Elizabeth is saying, "Blessed are you who believe. My husband didn't believe, and he can't talk right now. It's too bad he didn't believe like you, Mary. You have some things you can teach him now. Had he believed the Word of God, he would be talking right now, and we could be deciding what color the baby's room should be painted. But that's not going to happen. So I get to pick it myself."

"Blessed is she who believed..."—again, it emphasizes Mary's faith—"...for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." I love those words. Elizabeth is speaking prophetically under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God always keeps His promises; what God has spoken cannot be broken. God will do what He said He will do. "I promise that you will have the Messiah. You will have the Messiah, and He will be the Savior of the world." What a blessing! Think of how late at night they must have shared and talked.

By the way, Luke's Gospel was written by interviewing and listening to the stories told by the people in the Gospel. I believe Luke actually sat down with Mary and got her story and sat down with Elizabeth and got her story. I just wished he had included some of their conversation in the passage—some of the things they talked about. When I get to heaven I'm going to find Mary and Elizabeth, get them together and ask them to tell me what they talked about. I want to hear their side of the story.

Now we move from Elizabeth's prophecy to Mary's praise, in verses 46-56. Luke records, "And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He Who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.' And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house." She returned to her parents' house, because she is not yet married. She is still living with her parents.

Mary's song is recorded in this passage. It is known as The Magnificat. It is taken from the Latin for "magnify." "Magnify" is the first word in the Latin translation. Luke's Gospel is the "singing Gospel." Around the narrative of the birth of Christ are all these songs: the song of Elizabeth and the song of Mary and the song of Simeon and the song of Hannah. They are all singing at Christmas. And that's what Christmas is about; it's time to sing.

The song that Mary sings reveals her knowledge of the Old Testament, especially the book of Psalms and the parallel from the book of 1 Samuel, the song of Hannah. Hannah was given a promise of a son, and she broke forth in song. It's evident that Mary was familiar with Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2. She was also familiar with the psalms, so she knew the Word of God.

Mary was most likely illiterate, but as a young girl growing up in a Hebrew home, she would be

taught the Scriptures. She would go to synagogue, and she and the other women would be separated from the men; the men on one side and the women on the other side. They would listen through the grid and hear the Scriptures being read. Young, little Mary would absorb the Word of God and take it into her heart.

An interesting thought is that as the Word of God filled her heart, praise came out of her lips. Joy came out of her life. So if you want joy and praise, fill your heart and your mind with the Word of God. Fill your mind with the Scriptures and your heart and lips will shout forth the praises of God. Someone said about Mary's song that "It is the perfect mosaic of Old Testament quotations."

I would also say that Mary sings in Hebrew poetry. She uses what's called "parallelism," not rhythm and meter like our poetry. She would make contrasts or statements in different ways. She would say one thing in different ways or create contrasts. Then we will see that she speaks in the prophetic past in verses 51-55; she speaks in the past tense about what God has done in anticipation of what God is going to do. She will say what God has done with the idea of looking forward prophetically to what God is going to do.

I want you to note three things about Mary's song. First of all, note how passionately she magnified the Lord, in verses 46-47. She said, "My soul..."—or the Hebrew concept means "my inner person" or "the real me" or "I" or "who I am"—"...magnifies the Lord..."—and here's the parallelism or Hebrew poetry—"...and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." So she says, "my soul" and then she says "my spirit." Then it's "magnify" and then it's "rejoice." It's Hebrew poetry. She is saying the same thing in different ways.

But the point is that she is magnifying God with her heart. We magnify God in several ways. We magnify God with our minds when we absorb Scripture and read the Word of God. God becomes bigger to us.

A lot of Christians struggle in trusting God, in believing in God and resting in God's Word and promises. You need to know God better. You need to acquaint yourself with God, so you'll be at peace. Sometimes when people come to me and they're troubled, my counsel to them is to do a study of the attributes of God. Discover that God is love. Discover that God is all-powerful. Discover that God is everywhere present. Discover that God is good. Discover that God is merciful and kind. Get to know God and be at peace. The problem with us so often is that God is too small in our eyes. "He can't help us pay the mortgage this month. He can't get us a new job, or He can't heal our marriage or He can't save our kids or our husband or our wife. He can't heal our bodies." We think God is too small, so acquaint yourself with God and be at peace. It's evident from this praise of Mary that she understood the nature and character of God. So how do we magnify God? We can't make God bigger, but we can make Him bigger in our minds by the study of Scripture. I believe that doctrine leads to doxology.

Secondly, we magnify God with all of our hearts, which is the real you, when our soul and spirit are worshipping God. Sometimes you come and you're just here physically, but you're not here

mentally or emotionally. Your heart is not engaged. You say, "Okay, I'm going to church; it is Christmas. Okay, preacher boy, get it over with. I've got shopping to do. The malls are getting more crowded." Did you know that church attendance declines in December? Yes, everybody shows up Christmas eve, but leading up to Christmas eve, people are too burned out, too tired, too busy, got too much shopping to do. Some of you are busted right now; you know you're thinking about what you need to buy.

Come back. Come back. Pay attention; you're in church. You're here to worship God and hear His Word. Forget about the shopping today. Think about Christ. Isn't it amazing that we get so busy with Christmas that we forget Christ. We forget Jesus. Yet that's what Christmas is all about.

So we magnify God with our minds when we read Scripture and fill our soul and spirit with praise to God. In verse 47, Mary rejoiced with her lips. Thirdly, I believe she spoke out audibly. Elizabeth spoke out with a loud voice, and Mary spoke with a loud voice.

Fourthly, we magnify God when we trust Him as our Savior. In verse 47, Mary said, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." You only need a Savior if you're a sinner. I don't mean to offend anyone, but Mary was a sinner just like you and me. The fact that she said, "God my Savior," means that she was a sinner in need of a Savior, and that Savior was the child that she bore. She wasn't co-redemptress. She was a sinner being used by God who needed to trust her own Son for salvation.

When Mary said, "God my Savior," it was another reference to the deity of Christ. We also mentioned that Elizabeth said to Mary, "the mother of my Lord." "Mother" speaks of His humanity; "my Lord" speaks of His deity. So even Elizabeth alluded to the fact that He is both human and divine. And here Mary says that "My Son is God and will be my Savior."

So we magnify Him with our lips and when we trust Him as our Savior. Psalm 40:16 says, "Let such as love Thy salvation say continually, 'The Lord be magnified.'"

Last, but not least, how we magnify God is by the way we live our lives. We can't make God bigger, but if we live holy, humbly, obediently, trusting in God—we live lives that are becoming of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—we are magnifying God.

I have in my office a magnifying glass. Thank God for magnifying glasses when we get older. You have to have one of those to take your medicine. Why do they make the print so small on medicine bottles? I don't know what I'm supposed to do. You need a microscope to read the directions. So you use the magnifying glass to make the words bigger.

Now we don't really make God bigger, but we make Him appear bigger in the eyes of others. Our lives become a magnifying glass. When people see God through your life, God is bigger, when we're living lives that are pleasing to the Lord. So Mary passionately magnifies the Lord, and so should we.

The second thing about Mary's song is that she purposefully magnifies the Lord. Why did Mary magnify the Lord? Let me give you some reasons why. Number one, is because God regards the humble. Notice this in her song in verse 48: "For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant" or "handmaiden." A handmaiden was a slave girl, the lowest slave girl in the household. "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

It's a common theme that runs through all of Scripture that God comes to the humble, that God comes to the downtrodden, that God comes to the outcast, that God comes to the broken. When the shepherds were in the field, the angels came to them and announced to them that the Messiah, the Savior, was born. Shepherds were the lowest on the social ladder. You can't get lower than a shepherd. They weren't allowed to testify in court because they were so crooked, worldly and bad and just low-lifers. They never got jury duty. I think that's pretty cool. Next time you get a jury-duty notice, reply, "I'm a shepherd. You don't want me." So the first people who were told that Messiah was born were the shepherds. They became the first evangelists. They were the first ones to spread the news.

Imagine people asking, "Who are those people preaching?"

"Only shepherds. Don't listen to them."

But all through the Bible it teaches that God comes to the humble. He comes to the lowly. He comes to the downcast. He comes to the downtrodden. He comes to the broken. In Psalm 34:18 it says, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." I love that.

I want you to know that if your heart is broken, God is thinking about you. God cares about you. God will come to you if you'll turn to Him. He'll heal your broken heart. God comes to those who are downcast, lonely and broken. What a picture that is.

But Mary, secondly, was magnifying God because of His perfection or because of Who God is, verses 49-50. I want you to see three things that she magnifies about God. Number one, that God is mighty. "For He Who is mighty has done great things for me." God is infinite in power. God was mighty to give Elizabeth a son. God was mighty that in the womb of the virgin Mary there was conception. In verse 37 we read, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." When you're discouraged, think about the omnipotence of God; that His power is infinite.

Thirdly, she magnified God because He is holy. I love verse 49: "And holy is His name." When the Bible uses the statement about God, the "name of the Lord"—The Bible says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous run into it and are safe." The word "name" there means His nature or His character. It's not talking about a proper name; it's talking about His nature or His character. God's nature and God's character is holy.

I've mentioned this many times, but I want to mention it again: The number one attribute mentioned in the Bible about God is His holiness. In the Bible, God says He is holy more than anything else; more than His love, more than His grace, more than His mercy, more than His

kindness. God is holy. If God wants you to know anything about Him, it's this: He is holy.

You say, "Well, that's cool, but I don't know what that means." It's a concept kind of hard to grasp. Let me make it as simple as I can. It is a negative and a positive. The negative means that in God there is no evil at all. It is impossible for God to do anything evil, sinful or wrong. 1 John 1:5 says, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." So any thoughts you have about God like, God, that's not fair or God, that's not right or God, why did You do that? or God, that's unholy or God isn't good, those aren't right. God is perfectly holy; there's no sinfulness in God.

The positive is that all goodness and all righteousness is in God. So it's the absence of evil that's the presence of good. The Bible also says, "God is love." There are two statements made in John's epistles: "God is light" and "God is love." So we understand that God has all goodness. The thing that blesses me the most about God's holiness is that all the attributes of God—His mercy, His love, His kindness, His compassion, His patience—are influenced by and affected by His holiness. His love is a holy love. His wrath is a holy wrath. His goodness is holy. His kindness is holy. Everything God is and everything God does is influenced by His perfect holiness. Psalm 99:9 says, "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy."

Then notice the fourth thing Mary mentions about God's character and attributes. In verse 50, she mentions that God is merciful. "And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation." So God regards the humble, God is mighty, God is holy and God is merciful. God is a God of mercy. God's mercy is that He doesn't give us what we deserve. You should be glad that God doesn't give you what you deserve. I sometimes meet people who say, "Well, I deserve better." You deserve hell, buckaroo! I just thought I'd encourage you; God bless you. Now have a good day. If God gave us all what we deserved, we'd all be in hell right now. Aren't you glad you came to church today?

You meet someone and you ask, "How are you doing today?"

They can say, "I'm doing great because I'm not in hell right now. Because God is merciful."

Mercy is God not giving us what we deserve. We've "all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." "There is no one righteous; no not one." "The wages of sin is death," so God shows His mercy by not sending us to hell.

Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve. Mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve, and grace is God giving us what we don't deserve, which is heaven. So we get to go to heaven even though we don't deserve it and we should be in hell, but we don't go there because He's a merciful God. Mary understood God's mercy.

The Bible speaks so much about God's mercy. In Isaiah 5:7, it says, "God's mercy is great." In 1 Peter 1:3, it says, God's mercy is "abundant." In Psalm 106:1, "His mercy endureth forever." In Lamentations 3:22-23 the prophet cried that "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed...They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness."

I want you to notice in verse 50 that God's mercies are "on those who fear Him." It means that you reverence God and respect God. You love God so much that you don't want to do anything to offend God or hurt God. When you love someone, you don't intentionally or purposely want to hurt that person. Sometimes we do, but we don't want to, we don't mean to and it hurts us when we hurt someone we love. When you love God with all your heart, your soul, your strength, your mind, you want to bless God. You want to please God. You want to put a smile on God's face.

That's what it means to fear the Lord. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The smartest thing you can do is have a respect for God and a reverence for God and a love for God. If you do, God's mercy will be upon you.

Not only you, but I love what it says in verse 50: "...from generation to generation." When I was reading that this week, I thought about my kids and my grandkids and if the Lord tarries, maybe my great-grandkids. I want God to be merciful to them. Don't you want the mercy that God has shown you to go from generation to generation? You watch your kids and their struggles. They're getting married and having kids and they need a place to live and need jobs, and you're worried about them and praying for them. It's like, "Lord, please bless my children. Please watch over my children. Be merciful to my children." He says, "Yes; from generation to generation to generation." In my background I have generations of godly grandparents and godly parents, and blessings have come to me and I want it to continue in my family. God's mercy is "from generation to generation." Do you praise God for His mercy to you?

Thirdly, I want you to notice that not only did Mary worship passionately and purposely, but she also sang and worshipped prophetically. She magnified the Lord prophetically. In verses 51-56, she speaks in the prophetic past tense. It actually started in verse 48 where she said, "He has." Verse 51, "He has" and "He has." Verse 52, "He has." Verse 53, "He has" and "He has." Verse 54, "He has." Verse 55, "He spoke." About eight times in this song of Mary, she talked about what God has—past tense—done, with the idea that in the future, with her promised Son, God is going to do the same.

I want to break it down for you. In verse 51, "He has scattered the proud." In verse 52, "He has put down the mighty." In verse 53, "The rich He has sent away empty." Here's the contrast: In verse 50, He shows mercy to those who fear Him. In verse 52, He exalts the humble. In verse 53, "He has filled the hungry with good things." When I read that, I say, "Thank you, Lord." In verse 54, He helped Israel. And in verse 55, "He spoke." He made a promise to Abraham. And God keeps His promises.

These are all the things that God did. And you see the parallelism in Mary's statements. He scatters the proud, He puts down the mighty and He sends the rich away. But He shows mercy to those who fear Him, He exalts the humble, He fills the hungry with good things, He helped Israel in that He spoke a covenant and a promise to Abraham.

That means that God promised Abraham that "through his seed, all the nations of the world will

be blessed.” Abraham and Sarah were old, and God called Abraham from the area of Ur of the Chaldees. It was an area of Babylon where they worshipped the sun and the moon. They were all pagan. And the God of creation appeared to Abraham and called him and separated him “into a land that I will show you.” God gave him the promise of the land and that Abraham’s seed will be multiplied by number like the sand along the seashore and the stars in the sky.

Now Abraham was about 100 years old at this time, and God tells Abraham that he’s going to have so many kids that their number will be more than the sand of the seashore and the stars. Can you imagine what Abraham is thinking? Ei, yi, yi. Talk about a need to put an addition on the tent! How are we going to do that? Abraham is 100 and Sarah is 90, and yet she’s going to have a promised child. Isn’t God amazing?

Abraham didn’t say, “No way! I can’t believe that!” One of the most important references in all the Bible is Abraham’s response. It says, “He believed God, and it was counted to me...”—or “imputed” or “given to him”—“...as righteousness.” That’s how God saves sinners. Do you know that actually set the precedent of how God saves sinners? God makes a promise, you believe His promise and God saves you by His grace. You say, “It can’t be that easy.” It is. It’s not cheap, but it is easy. You have to turn from your sin, believe that Jesus died on the Cross for you and then He rose from the dead. You have to trust Him as your Savior, and God will impute to you—God will count unto you—righteousness.

“You mean I don’t have to be baptized? I don’t have to be good? I don’t have to work hard?” Those things will happen once you’re saved, but that isn’t how you get saved. Don’t put the cart before the horse. Works are the fruit of salvation. You don’t work to be saved; you work because you’re saved. Works just manifest from a heart that has truly been saved. The basis of salvation is believing God. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

“No boasting here. All I did was trust Him. No boasting. All I did was come naked, poor and wretched and blind. All I did was come with my hands empty and said, ‘God, please give me salvation. God, please forgive my sins. I believe Your promises that Jesus came and died on the Cross for me, died and was buried and rose again from the dead.’” “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”

So how does Mary’s song end? “He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.” God keeps His promises. Whatever God has promised will happen. God promised a Savior and He came. If we trust Him and believe Him, we will be forgiven and what will happen? We’ll have joy.

The passage closes in verse 56. “And Mary remained with her about three months.” That means she was with Elizabeth up to the birth of John the Baptist. Now, again, we don’t know if she left just before the birth. Did Elizabeth start into labor and Mary said, “I’m leaving”? Did she stick around for the birth of the forerunner? This is just my theory—we’ll find out when we

get to heaven—but I think she stayed around until John was born. I think that when she saw that forerunner, her heart was just filled with joy. “This is the son who will point to my Son and say, ‘Behold the Lamb of God Who carries away the sins of the world.’” What joy must have filled her heart.

But Mary had to leave the comfort and the encouragement and the understanding of Elizabeth to go back to face her parents. She’s three months pregnant. She’s not married yet. She had to go back to tell Joseph. “Joseph, I need to meet you at Starbucks tonight. We need to talk.” Joseph freaked out. He loved Mary, and he didn’t want her to be punished, so he was going to put her away privately. I believe Mary told Joseph after her time with Elizabeth. She got so encouraged and so built up she thought, Okay, I’m ready to go back to face Joseph. She’s already starting to show. She’s three months pregnant and she had to go back. Then Joseph received a dream in which he was told not to be afraid to take Mary, because “that which is conceived in her is the work of the Holy Spirit.”

So we see this beautiful story, and all the way through, we see God’s fingerprints. Isn’t that amazing? All of it is in anticipation of the Savior’s birth. We now are going to sing a song based on The Magnificat; that our soul should magnify the Lord. One of the ways we do that is corporately, in congregational worship. So as we sing, just lift your voices in praise and thanksgiving to God.

Let’s pray.