

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### “TRUTHS TO MAKE YOUR HEART SING”

For individual study or discussion

Recall from last week’s study as Elizabeth exclaims in wonder, “*Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!*” as her baby leaps upon hearing Mary’s greeting. Elizabeth then acknowledges her joy at being in the presence of her Lord (vv. 42-43). In Luke 1:46-55, Mary responds to Elizabeth’s proclamation by singing a song exalting the fulfillment of God’s promises. It’s a song of God’s great reversal and rejoicing as he raises the lowly and exalts the weak, a song that is permeated with promises of the past soon to be fulfilled. Mary’s song holds *truths to make your heart sing* during this Advent season.

#### Who God sees: the humble and lowly (vv. 46-48)

Mary’s song reminds us that joyful worship is always the proper response when we know who God sees. Mary’s magnification of thanksgiving testifies of God’s divine grace as he remembers the “*the humble estate*” of his people (cf. Psalm 136:23). Mary, who is in a lower social stratum of her day, is exalted by her miraculous and significant pregnancy. This pregnancy that causes her womb to become the new and greater Ark of the Covenant, where “*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14).

- How does Mary identify her position in relation to God? What is significant about how she views herself and how she views God? How does this view influence how she lives her life?
- Compare Mary’s song with Hannah’s song found in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. What are the similarities?
- Read Luke 6:20-26 and Matthew 5:3-12. How do Mary and Hannah’s songs relate to Jesus’ teaching on the upside-down Kingdom of God?

#### Who God is: mighty, holy, and merciful (vv. 49-50)

Mary’s song reminds us that joyful worship is always the proper response when we know who God is. At the heart of Mary’s hymn is a remarkable celebration of God, a God who is mighty, holy, and merciful. R.C. Sproul concludes, “*How beautiful is this description of the character of God. Mary is saying that God is so holy, so transcendently majestic, that His very name is holy. That’s who He is. That’s His identity. He is the Holy One of Israel. He is not just mighty, not just raw force or brute power, but He has a holy power, a holy might, a holy strength, ‘and His mercy is on those who fear Him.’ Don’t miss the impact of those words. The One from whom we receive mercy, beloved, is the Almighty One, the Omnipotent One, the Holy One.*”<sup>1</sup>

- Psalm 103 explores the attributes of God that are highlighted in Mary’s song, such as his steadfast love, his mercy, and his holiness. How do these attributes shape your understanding of God? What can you learn from this psalm and Mary’s song about how to praise God?

#### What God does: brings his Kingdom in unexpected ways (vv. 51-55)

Mary’s song reminds us that joyful worship is always the proper response when we know what God does. As pastor David Mathis states, “*He chooses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. He chooses what is weak in the world to shame the strong. He chooses what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not — like a forgotten town called Nazareth and an unwed maiden carrying a child conceived without a human father — to bring to nothing things that are (1 Cor. 1:27-28). He humbles the strong and magnifies his strength by exalting the weak. Christmas turns the world upside down.*”<sup>2</sup>

- Mary concludes her song of praise in verses 54-55. What do you notice about these verses? Where is Mary’s focus? How does God’s faithfulness capture Mary’s thoughts and affections?
- Read Genesis 22:16-18. How is Jesus’ birth related to God’s promise to Abraham? Why would Mary consider this worthy of praise?
- Advent and singing go together! As a small group, discuss your favorite Christmas carols. Find similar themes of God’s great reversal in raising the lowly through Jesus’ humble birth.

DATE: December 15, 2024

SPEAKER: Wil/Brian

SERIES: Advent

PASSAGE: Luke 1:46-55

### RENEW: 31 Days of Prayer

#### DAY 15: The Fruit of the Spirit—Kindness

**PRAYER:** Loving Savior, thank you for leaving the wonder of glory to enter the darkness of our peril so that you might show us the particular tender care of our Father in heaven. How often we fail to express your kindness to others whom you have placed in our lives. We confess that we bite and devour one another with our words, thoughts, and actions, and thus fail to live out the summary of the law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” We confess that we live harried, busy lives that focus on our own agendas and needs rather than lives attentive to the needs of those around us. Each day, we function without awareness of your presence, and we miss opportunities that you give us to express kindness in our world. Forgive us and form us so that we embrace our identity as your chosen people, holy and dearly loved. May the activity of our lives flow out of that identity so that we treat others with compassion. You teach us that whatever we do for one of the least of these, the hungry, thirsty, stranger, needy, sick, and imprisoned, we do for you. Give us eyes that see, hearts that care, and hands that serve. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS**  
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<sup>1</sup>Sproul, R.C. *The Magnificat (Part 1)*. November 27, 2011. <https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/magnificat-part-1>

<sup>2</sup>Mathis, David. *A Christmas Carol for the Weak*. December 23, 2018. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-christmas-carol-for-the-weak>