

The Song of Mary – ‘A Life Song’

(Luke 1:46-56, taken from the Song of Hannah, 1 Samuel 2)

Luke 1:46, “And Mary said: ‘My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed’”

What are the events in life that make you want to sing? Can you remember a time when your heart was so filled with emotion that you just wanted to sing? In many ways singing is a natural reaction to the good things that happen to us in life. Today, as we examine this, Mary’s **Life Song**, let us try to identify with an expression of joy that comes not because of human achievements, but that comes from knowing the high favour and great mercy of our Heavenly Father. As we prepare for Christmas and look forward to celebrating our Saviour’s birth, let us learn from this humble woman that the birth of Jesus is God’s greatest gift to all mankind. Therefore, in every situation it gives us good reason to sing with “*spirit and joy.*”

“Blessed are you among women...” (verse 42) But look at the preceding verses; **“At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth.”** The angel’s words to Mary earlier presented her with some difficult decisions. As a woman pledged to be married, it would have been natural for Mary to want to immediately go and see Joseph, her future husband. Certainly, the birth of a child involves him as well. But instead she goes to see her cousin Elizabeth. Mary probably wanted the advice of an older wiser woman. After all, Joseph may not believe her... *“What do you mean an angel came to you at night? He told you what?”* She could not go to anyone else because they would logically assume that Mary had cheated on Joseph, an offence punishable by death. The pressure on Mary to make a quick decision based on her emotions or circumstance would have been great. But that’s not what she did.

In **verse 38** Mary says to the angel, **“I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me according to your word.”** It appears that as soon as the angel left her Mary prepared to go and visit her relative Elizabeth. I believe that Mary did so in obedience to God, or as an instant response to God’s leading on what to do next. Mary was ready to fully submit herself to God’s will and made a wise decision to seek counsel from a Godly woman. And her decision was a blessed one. Look at **verses 42-45**, **“In a loud voice Elizabeth exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished.’”**

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth proclaims a declaration of blessedness upon Mary. The word blessed is used three times in regards to Mary’s predicament. Elizabeth also declares the special **favour** Mary has received from God. This blessing culminates in **verse 45**, **“Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!”** Mary is an example of a great woman of **faith** who believes in the promises of God. God’s word is true and He will never forsakes us or forget His promises to us. For this reason, we are eternally **blessed** every time we put our faith in Him.

The **Song of Mary**, also referred to as **The Magnificat**. The Magnificat in Latin is translated ‘glorifies’ or ‘magnifies’. This is the title and first line of the Song of Mary. Just as the natural celebration after winning a

gold medal is to sing the national anthem, Mary's reaction to the amazing blessing of God upon her life is to **sing**. Her soul is so deeply moved that the only appropriate expression of **joy** is with song. To understand more fully the reason for Mary's singing, let us look carefully at the words of her song. ***“And Mary said: ‘My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me – Holy is His name.’”***

First, Mary acknowledges her humble state as God's servant. And note, there was nothing outwardly special about this young girl living in the small town of Nazareth. Her humble state isn't the kind of thing you would put on a resume – or something you would be especially proud of. But it is very important! It is important because every one of us must acknowledge who we are before God. Only then can we fully appreciate how much God has really done for us. *One cannot know how far he has come without knowing where he has come from.* These days, few (if any) want to acknowledge weakness or lack, or even that they need help.

Not so with God. He is very mindful of the humble state of His servant. As Christians, we should never forget that we were unable to choose God but rather in our humble state He chose us. Praise God! Mary cannot help but be grateful for the favour shown to her because she knows she has done nothing to deserve it. Even today her name is synonymous with Jesus – the Saviour of the world. Songs have been written about her and women hope to be like her. Her song is a song of *rejoicing in God*, who saved her from sin and death and blessed her so abundantly. And it is for this reason that we too should sing at Christmas time. I'm sure we all have a **life song** in our hearts!

When you take a closer look at your life you can see that God has done great things for you. Through salvation He has given you a “new life” filled with mission and purpose. So during this festive season, why not take an inventory of your life and see the amazing things God has done for you. Be encouraged to know that God will continue to do great things for you today, and will do even more in 2010.

Look at **verses 50-53**, ***“His mercy extends to those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.”*** Mary was able to see beyond herself and see that the birth of Jesus would have significance throughout history. Her ‘big picture’ view included all generations including us today. She praised God for who He is and for His justice and mercy. When you live in obedience to God, and the word of God, this should be your expression of thanks to Him for what He has done. It is your **life song**. Mary had a song in her heart when she received favour from God – so too can you! When you received Jesus you also received the favour and blessings of God.

Finally, **verses 54 and 55**. ***“He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”*** God never forgot Israel, His chosen people. Even when they wandered away and rejected Him. Let us be reminded that God remembers us, too. I pray that He restores the joy that may have been lost in the struggle of everyday life. You are the Lord's servant. May the **joy of the Lord** be evident when you sing, when you dance, and in every discourse you have with others. Never forget what God has done for you. Through this festive season I pray that you might restore your **life song** and experience true **joy** in Jesus Christ. He is the good news of great joy for all the people. So rejoice and be glad!

To end, I would like to read our key verses from a literal translation, *“Mary said, ‘I’m bursting with joy and God-news; I’m singing a life song to my Saviour God. God took one good look at me, and look what happened – I’m the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others. His grace and mercy flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe before Him. For this I am eternally grateful.’”*