

Luke 1:39-56 "Mary's Song" Dec. 23, 2012

Joe was in love with Sally, but she did not love him back. So he decided to win her affection by sending her a love letter every week. A month went by and she did not respond, so he wrote her two love letters a week for the next month. When she failed to respond this time, he started writing her every other day. Again getting no response, he began writing every day. That did it. She finally fell in love. She married the mailman!

There was a certain millionaire, who collected live alligators. He kept them in the pool in back of his mansion. The millionaire also had a beautiful daughter who was single. One day he decides to throw a huge party, and during the party he announces, "My dear guests I have a proposition to every man here. I will give one million dollars or my daughter to the man who can swim across this pool full of alligators and emerge alive!" As soon as he finished speaking, there was a large splash!! Everyone turned and watched the guy in the pool swimming with all his might. The crowd cheered him on as he was swimming for his life. Amazingly he made it to the other side with only some minor injuries. The millionaire was impressed. He said, "My boy that was incredible! Fantastic! I didn't think it could be done! So do you want my daughter or the one million dollars?" The man answers, "Sir, I don't want either 1; I just want the name of the person who pushed me!"

A preacher gave a fine sermon Sunday on love, forgiveness, and understanding. On Wed. he worked hard, concreting a section of his drive way. He built the frame, mixed, poured, and smoothed the concrete. As he sitting at the kitchen table, resting and enjoying a cold glass of lemonade when he saw the neighbor boy walking through his fresh concrete. Quickly he ran outside and gave him a stern lecture on respecting other people and their property. The boy ran home in tears. The neighbor on the other side, a parishioner, saw what happened. He walked over to the preacher and asked what happened to Sunday's sermon about love, forgiveness, and understanding? The preacher thought for a minute and then replied it's easier to love in the abstract than in the concrete.

Love is the greatest motivator known to man. People have done great and heroic things for love. They have faced grave dangers and endured intense pain. Some have even given their lives for love. Jesus said in John 15:13 "Greater Love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." Then He called us His friends. He said we are His friends if we do what so ever He commands us. We want to be Jesus' friend don't we? Are we willing to do what ever he commands us to do? Even if it puts us in danger?

By agreeing to be the mother of the Messiah, Mary was taking a big chance. Although legally she was married, technically, she was not. She was engaged to Joseph. They had not yet taken their wedding vows. In those days, an engagement was a legally binding contract and the two were considered married even though they did not live together and were not intimate. If either one did not want to go through with the marriage, they had to get a divorce. So if she was found to be with child, and Joseph said it was not his, she could be stoned for adultery. Mary literally risked her life to be Jesus' mother.

But when we work for God, he defends us. He sent an angel to Joseph in a dream and the angel told him that Mary's baby was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She would have a son and his name was to be Jesus, which means the LORD saves. He told him that Jesus would save the people from their sins. Jesus was born to die; we are born to live, to live for Christ; is that what we are doing? What is God commanding us to do for Him?

In John 15:12 Jesus commands us to love one another as He has loved us. How does he love us? Unconditionally and with all His heart. Do we do love others like that? Are we Jesus' friends? Do other people see the love of Jesus in us? Are we willing to obey his every command, even the ones that put us in jeopardy? Do we trust him to protect us if his command puts us in jeopardy? Do we love Him enough to obey him, no matter what?

As we contemplate these questions, let us look to our Lord in prayer. (Pray)

This section of scripture is called the Magnificat; which means magnifies in Latin. Mary's song of praise is filled with Old Testament allusions and quotes. This song reveals Mary's heart. It is filled with love for God. It reveals to us her mind as well. It is filled with the words of God. What are our hearts and minds filled with?

There are 4 hymns of praise to God in the 1st 2 chapters of Luke. This is the first one. In Luke 1:67-79 we have the Benedictus, given by Zacharias, which praises God for the soon coming of the Messiah and tells us that, his son John the Baptist will prepare the way of the Lord. In Luke 2:14 we have the heavenly host singing praises to God as the angel announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds; and Simeon has the last one in Luke 2:29-32 when Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to be dedicated to the LORD. These each tell us that Jesus is the Messiah. Do we tell others that Jesus is the Messiah? Do tell others about the Him? Do we share our Jesus?

Let us set the stage for this song of praise. In Luke 1:26-38 Mary gets a visit from God's angel Gabriel. He has shocking news for her; she has been chosen to give birth to the Son of God. What an honor; what a challenge. So after her encounter with Gabriel, Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Upon hearing Mary's voice, both Elizabeth and John are filled with the Holy Spirit. John leaps in his mothers' womb and Elizabeth prophesied. Elizabeth says the same thing Gabriel said, blessed are you among women. She confirms that what Gabriel said concerning Jesus would happen. Our faith allows God to use us. Elizabeth said blessed is she who believes. Do we believe?

After Elizabeth's blessing, Mary glorified God for what He was going to do through her. She called him my savior, which shows she too knew she also needed a savior. Jesus died for everybody, his mother included. All of us have sinned, we each need forgiveness. Mary realized this, do we?

Mary pictures God as a champion of the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden. God uses these people to do his will. Mary was about 15, a girl from a poor family in Nazareth

Most people of her day would have thought that there was nothing she could do for God. God uses anyone who will obey him. He used the shepherds, despised people to begin his message that the Messiah was born; He used fisherman to take the message into all the world. No one is despised in Gods eyes, he loves everybody; he has a purpose for everybody. He has a purpose for you and for me; are we allowing him to work through us? Are we willing to let him perform his purpose through us?

Mary tells us that God regarded the lowly state of his maid servant. The term maid servant means female slave. She says she is a slave for God. In Titus 1:1 Paul calls himself a bond servant of God. Are we like Paul & Mary, a slave to the lord Jesus Christ?

Mary is not being proud or boastful when she says "henceforth all generations will call me blessed." She is believing what both the angel and Elizabeth had already told her; she is thanking God, recognizing and using the gifts He has given her. Do we recognize and use our gifts? Are we thankful for them? Pride is not limited to taking credit for what God has done; it is also refusing to accept the gifts he wants to give us. We must not deny or ignore our gifts; we must thank God for them and use them to bring Him glory and obey his will for our lives. What ever God calls us to do; he will equip us to do. All we need to be is obedient. Are we obeying God's call upon our lives?

Mary used the word "henceforth". Hence forth means from now on. Mary will no longer just be some obscure Hebrew teenager; she will be the most honored woman in the history of the world. She will forever be the mother of the messiah; her life will change forever. So will the life of every one who comes into contact with Jesus Christ. From the day we accept Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, our lives will never be the same. God's favor will be upon us too. But that does not mean we will automatically have fame and fortune; nor does it means we will never face sorrow or heartache. The honor of being Christ's mother brought Mary much pain. She faced ridicule from the people in her home town, it had to stress her relationship with Joseph until the angel spoke to him, and of course she had to watch her own son be rejected, denied, betrayed, and crucified. But she also saw him rise again!

God is mighty and all powerful. Gabriel told Mary that with God nothing is impossible. God is holy. God is merciful to those who fear him. Fearing God

doesn't mean to be afraid of him, but it means to respect him and treat him with awe and reverence. Psalm 145:17-18 *"The Lord is righteous in all his ways, Gracious in all his works. The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth."* God passes his love on from generation to generation. God is love. He will always love people. The problem is not everyone loves him back. Do we love Him?

Those who don't love God had better be afraid of Him. He has shown the strength of his arm by scattering the proud and putting down the mighty while exalting the lowly. He has fed the hungry and sent the rich away empty. God will judge those who reject him.

People are in trouble when God raises his arm against them. In Exodus 8:19 the plague of lice was said to be from the finger of God. In Exodus 3:20 all the plagues were said to come from the hand of God. But in Exodus 15:16 the red Sea was parted by the arm of God. We need to humble ourselves so God doesn't have to humble us. Pride takes away the credit from God and gives it to man. God can do anything, man alone can do nothing. Proverbs 16:5 *"everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD."* Pride is what kept the Pharisees from believing Jesus. Proverbs 16:18 *"Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."* That is why verse 19 says *"Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoils with the proud."* Are we proud or humble? Do we love God? God has mercy on those who love him. God promised Abraham that all the world would be blessed through him. God was talking about Jesus. All the Old Testament prophecy about The Messiah points to Jesus. God kept his word and his promises. They were all fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus is the Messiah. Just like the angel told Joseph, He came to save his people from their sins. Not just his people, but all people. He did it because He loves us.

John 3:16 says *"For God so loved the world that HE gave HIS only begotten Son, that who so ever believes in HIM shall not perish, but shall have ever lasting life."* John 3:17 says *"For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through HIM might be saved."* Jesus died so we could live. God loves us. He gave us HIS son. Jesus loves us. He laid down His life for us. Jesus died for our sins. Not just ours, but the sins of the whole world. That is why He was born, to die for sin. Jesus was born to die. We were born to live; to live for Jesus. Is that what we are doing?

Mary's song is divided into 3 parts; vs. 46-50 praise God for what he has done for her. Do we praise God for all he does for us? Vs. 51-53 she praises him for what he has done and will do to oppressors of his people. Do we praise God for His protection? Do we pray for those being oppressed? And verses 53-56 she praises him for what he has done and what he will do for the

church. The church is the bride of Christ. All Christians are the church. Are we praying for the church, the lost, and the soon return of Jesus?

Christmas is all about love. Yet a lot of people feel unloved at Christmas time. How can that be? They simply have missed the true meaning of Christmas, the baby in the manger who would soon grow up and become the savior of the world.

Too many people miss the real meaning of Christmas because too many Christians aren't doing their job; spreading the love of Jesus to everyone. Christians need to tell people that God loves them. God is love, Jesus is God, therefore Jesus is love. Christians are to be a reflection of Jesus to the world. So we should also be love. Can people see the love of Jesus in us? How can people tell if we are indeed Christians? The song says by our love. They will know we are Christians by our love. This is biblical. Jesus tells us in John 13:35 "*By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*" We need not only to show love for one another but to the lost as well.

In His book "Seeds of Greatness" Dennis Waitley describes love like this; L is for listening when another is speaking. O is for overlooking petty faults and forgiving all failures. V is for valuing other people for who they are. E is for expressing love in a practical way. These things describe God's love. He listens when we pray; he forgives us when we repent; he values us as the unique individuals that he made; and he is always expressing his love for us and to us. Do we listen to Him? Do we value Him? Do we express our love for him? Do we demonstrate these 4 things to others? Can people see the love of Jesus in us?

Charlie Brown once said nothing takes the taste out of peanut butter like unrequited love. But our love for God is never unrequited. He loved us first. He loved us while we were yet sinners. He loved us enough to send His only begotten Son to die for us. Charlie Brown was too shy and bashful to ever talk to the little red headed girl. So she never knew of his love for her. Too many people are walking around today not returning God's love because they don't know He loves them. Christmas is all about love; God's love for us. Are we sharing that love with others? Are we returning God's love to Him? Does the love of Jesus flow through us to others? Do our lives magnify our love for Christ? Do we love Christ? Are we living for Him? Do our souls magnify the Lord? Amen! Let's pray.