

Theme: Worship is focused on God and His Gospel, is formed and filled by the Word of God, and arises from personally experiencing God's faithfulness to His people through the ages.

I. Intro - Songs That Shaped Church Worship

- A. We are looking at the songs in Luke 1-2
- B. Several of these had a huge impact on church worship
- C. They are often known by their Latin names
 - 1. Simeon's song - Nunc Dimittis (Now let depart)
 - 2. Zechariah's song - Benedictus (Blessed be/praise)
 - 3. Mary's Song - Magnificat (Magnify/glorify)
- D. These became so well known if you Google the phrase the very Latin words refer to the songs in Luke 1-2!
- E. What is Mary's Magnificat and worship? What do we learn from it?

II. The Setting: The Surprising Narrative Twist

- A. Luke skillfully intertwines two narratives
 - 1. Several things link them together
 - a. Luke alternates between the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus throughout Luke 1-2
 - b. Both Elizabeth and Mary are miraculously pregnant
 - c. The angel Gabriel visited Zechariah and Mary to announce the impending miraculous pregnancies (the only two times he is mentioned in the NT!)
 - d. The identities and destinies of John and Jesus will be intertwined throughout their lives - and it begins during this visit!
 - 2. This explains the visit of Mary to Elizabeth and even how their two songs are positioned together.

B. The Surprising Twist - Mary's superior position

In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!" Luke 1:42-45

- 1. Elizabeth is the superior in Israelite culture - she is older, married, and the wife of a priest, while Mary is an unmarried, poor teen betrothed to a carpenter!
- 2. Yet, Elizabeth shifts the focus to Mary and gives her the higher position!
 - a. Blessed are you among women and blessed is your Child (v42), blessed is she who believed (v45)
 - b. Mary is given the superior blessed place!
- 3. The surprising twist provides a critical background to some of the key emphases in the Magnificat!

III. The Magnificat - Mary's Song of Worship

- A. Mary's response to this is humble worship!

And Mary said: "My soul **glorifies the Lord** ⁴⁷ and my spirit **rejoices in God my Savior**, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of **the humble state of his servant**. From now on all generations will call me blessed, Luke 1:46-48
- 1. Mary does not try to keep the focus on her but turns to God in worship!
- 2. Her response is to recognize her own humble state (v48) & to joyfully worship her Savior God (v46-47)!
- 3. The evidence of true faith and a right response to the work of the Spirit is to turn the focus from myself and to humbly worship our great God!

B. Learning from Mary's song of exaltation and worship

1. Worship is focused on God and His work

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me — holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers." Luke 1:46-55

- The highlighted phrases are about God & His work.
- God and His work is the relentless focus of Mary's song!
- Without this, "worship" is just emotional expression.
- Worship is not centered on me, my faithfulness, my work, or my love, but rather on God, His faithfulness, His work, and His mercy toward me!

2. Worship is centered on the Gospel through which God saves

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. Luke 1:51-53

- The Divine warrior humbles the proud and powerful and rescues the humble and marginalized

- The God we worship is mighty to rescue the powerless, to transpose the powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor, the proud and the humble.
- I will speak more about the kingdom of God and our responsibility to help the marginalized in After Hours.
- While this includes physical rescue, the primary focus is on rescue from sin and to give salvation.

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior ... ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.... ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers." Luke 1:46-47, 50, 54-55

- The beginning, middle, and end of the song define the rescue being extolled - God's power to show mercy to His people and save them!
- While we certainly praise and worship God for temporal rescue and blessings, worship is centered on God's work for us in the Gospel! This must be the beginning, center, and end of our worship!

3. Worship is formed and filled by the Word of God

My soul glorifies the Lord
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
Luke 1:46-47

- The whole song is built on parallelism - the main feature of biblical poetry. This includes synonymous (my soul glorifies/my spirit rejoices) and antithetical (he has brought down rulers/he has lifted up the humble - v52).
- Almost every phrase is drawn from Scripture!
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, Luke 1:47-48
yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. Habakkuk 3:18

to the One who remembered us in our low estate
His love endures forever. Psalm 136:23

1. Mary is alluding to Habakkuk 3:18; Psalm 136:23
 2. Almost every phrase in the song is drawn from OT
 3. Scholars have noted for years that the song is similar to the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10
 4. Scripture gave her the words to express her desires and experience
- c. True worship is formed by God's Word, following the patterns laid out in Scripture, and it is filled with the words and themes of Scripture!
- d. NOTE: Mary, an uneducated teen girl is like a master theologian in this song. This was due to her participation in the regular worship of Israel. This gave her the pattern and vocabulary of worship.
- e. This is why gathering with the church for public worship each week is critical to my spiritual health - and to future generations!
4. Worship arises from my personal experience of God's faithfulness to His people through the ages
And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior... ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation... ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers." Luke 1:46-47, 50, 54-55
- a. The Gospel is given to the people of God across all ages, and in worship we are always conscious of our place as part of God's people throughout the world and throughout time (v50, 54-55).
 - b. But this salvation must be experienced personally - which leads to personal worship (v46-47)

- c. Worship is not merely private emotion or experience, but is rooted in the worship of God's people across the ages and is expressed in unity with God's people in a local church.
- d. Worship is not a mere ritual but arises from our inner being (spirit/soul).
- e. Worship is not a dull, lifeless recitation or song about God's work in others, but is rather a personal response arising from deep within that glorifies and rejoices in God!
- f. Those who have received the mercy of God, who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good can't help but worship God from the depth of their being in a way that is full of life and passion.

C. Learning from Mary's song of exaltation and worship

1. Worship is focused on God and His work
2. Worship is centered on the Gospel through which God saves
3. Worship is formed and filled by the Word of God
4. Worship arises from my personal experience of God's faithfulness to His people through the ages

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Is God's work in my life leading me into fervent worship?
Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant." Luke 1:46-48
1. Mary had personally experienced God's work in her life and so she burst forth in worship in song!
 2. True worship is impossible apart from the personal experience of God's saving work, and if I have experienced His saving work it is impossible not to worship!

3. Have I personally experienced God's saving work?
4. If I have experienced God's saving work in my life, am I experiencing His daily Presence and work?
5. The cycle of worship: personal experience of God's work -> worship -> personal experience of God's work -> worship
6. During Advent, let us seek God and experience His Presence and work each day - and then VIBRANTLY offer Him worship throughout the week and as we gather each Sunday.

B. The Table of Joyful Worship

1. We worship at this Table each week
2. Here we focus on God and His Gospel, recounting His saving work as given in the Word of God, and we freshly experience His grace!
3. The cycle of worship: personal experience of God's work -> worship -> personal experience of God's work -> worship
4. [Keep the Feast \(video with lyrics\)](#)

Mary's Song of Exaltation (Magnificat)

Luke 1:46-55
 December 8, 2024
 Communion
 Romans 15:13

Teaching keywords: Advent and Christmas; biblical characters; prophecy (Old Testament); worship; salvation; humility

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

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