

Luke 1:46-55

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

Mary's Song of Praise
Known as "The Magnificat"

⁴⁶ And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on THE LOWLY STATE
of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call
me BLESSED,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One
has done great things for me,
and **holy** is his name;

⁵⁰ indeed, his *mercy* is for *those who fear him*
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from
their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his *mercy*,

⁵⁵ *according to the promise he made to our
ancestors,*

to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Luke 1:67-80

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

Zechariah's Song of Gratitude
Known as "The Benedictus"

⁶⁷ Then his [John the Baptizer's] father
Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and
prophesied:

⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and
redeemed them.

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Luke :: is one of the four gospels. Only in two (Luke and Matthew) is the story of the birth of Jesus told in detail. Luke's gospel is written according to tradition by Luke, a disciple-intern of the apostle Paul. Our readings today are the two songs of praise – or songs – that occur in Luke's telling of the birth of Jesus. They are only in Luke. Songs such as this occur elsewhere in the scriptures on the lips of Moses and Miriam after the Exodus, and Hannah after giving birth. This song of praise is a radical word of hope. It's a song that remembers the past, acknowledges current life, and prays for a future full of hope.

Connection to Hannah's Song in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 :: Biblical Scholars point to the close connection between Mary's song and that of Hannah (at the birth of Samuel) in 1 Samuel 2. The connection is in both the themes and the specific vocabulary employed.

¹ Hannah prayed and said,

"My heart exults in the Lord;
my strength is exalted in my God.
My mouth derides my enemies
because I rejoice in your victory.

² There is no Holy One like the Lord,
no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.

³ Talk no more so very proudly;
let not arrogance come from your mouth,
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.

⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.

⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for
bread,
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.

The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.

⁶ The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

⁷ The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low; he also exalts.

⁸ He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,

69 He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his child David,
70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets
from of old,
71 that we would be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us.
72 Thus he has shown the *mercy*
promised to our ancestors
and has remembered his holy covenant,
73 the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us 74 that we, being rescued from the hands of
our enemies,
might serve him without fear,
75 in holiness and righteousness
in his presence all our days.
76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most
High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
77 to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.
78 Because of the tender *mercy* of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
79 to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

80 The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he
was in the wilderness until the day he appeared
publicly to Israel.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- Mary’s song closely mirrors Hannah’s song in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Portions of Zechariah’s song pull inspiration from Malachi 3:1-2 and 4:5-6, as well as from Isaiah 9:2 and 42:7. The Gospel of Luke weaves together the past, present, and future in telling God’s unfolding story. From whose mouths do you hear the Magnificat sung today? *
- What gives you a “thrill of hope”? If you were to write a song of hope, what would the lyrics be? *
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – *or to us, as a church* – to act, speak, be, or change, through this word of scripture?

*Taken from the Sermon Planning Guide published by A Sanctified Art. Developed by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity.

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

and on them he has set the world.
9 He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked will perish in darkness,
for not by might does one prevail.
10 The Lord! His adversaries will be shattered;
the Most High will thunder in heaven.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the power of his anointed.”

THE LOWLY STATE :: ταπεινώσις pronounced /tapeinósis/ meaning: low estate, humiliation; abasement (in spirit), low condition (in circumstances). It's also used in Philippians 3:21 "The Lord Jesus Christ will transform the body of our humiliation[k] that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself."

holy:: ἅγιος pronounced /hagios/ meaning: sacred, holy; set apart by (or for) God. It means in large part different (unlike), other ("otherness"), holy; for the believer, (hágios) means "being similar to the nature of God - which is holy" because "different from the world."

BLESSED:: μακαρίζω pronounced /mak-ar-id'-zo/ meaning: bless, pronounce blessed or happy. It's the same word used in the beatitudes Matthew 5:1-10; historically reserved for those who were wealthy and privileged, having everything going for them.

mercy:: ἔλεος pronounced /eleos/ meaning: mercy, pity, compassion. It's the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures word kataisxýnō, (in Hebrew תָּוַן pronounced /chesed/) meaning: "covenant-loyalty, covenant-love" or goodness, kindness, loving-kindness in the OT-LXX over 170 times) – properly, "mercy" as it is defined by loyalty to God's covenant. It's how God loves.

those who fear him:: to fear means both to fear out of being afraid, and also out of respect, honor: recognizing your relationship to someone greater than you.