

Mary submitted to God’s call to miraculously bear in her womb the promised king—Christ Jesus. By faith she praised God and received blessing from her aunt Elizabeth and all future generations. These godly women are models of mature faith because they hoped in the coming Lord Jesus who is God with us.

Introduction – One of the side effects of the current pandemic and various restrictions is declining mental health. I think God is teaching those who are prosperous what it feels like to be poor. Material poverty’s most intense feeling, according to the poor, is a dark hopelessness. The lack of physical things is bad enough, but it’s the emotional, relational, and spiritual poverty that feels the most crushing.

I. What Did Mary Know?

A. She *must* go see Elizabeth, her godly aunt, to share good news (vv. 39-40)

If Elizabeth was already six months pregnant when Mary stayed with her for three months, and then returned home before Elizabeth gave birth (cf. Luke 1:57), then Mary must have left right away to visit Elizabeth after hearing the angel’s announcement. It seems Mary needed someone to talk to immediately about this miracle child. Who could believe such a story of a miraculously conceived child, of the Christ-child, of the Son of God growing in her womb? Who could minister to Mary in such a vulnerable situation? There seems only one person, her godly aunt Elizabeth who was also carrying an angel-announced child in her once-barren womb. It’s unthinkable Mary would keep this good news to herself. So she *had* to go tell Elizabeth.

B. The Holy Spirit is miraculously, *finally* fulfilling salvation (vv. 41-44)

How did Elizabeth know the baby leaping in her womb was for joy? She was filled with the Holy Spirit and thus was able to interpret this wonderful happening (Luke 1:44; cf. Luke 1:67; 6:23; Acts 2:4,17-18; 4:31). Baby John was already heralding with his nascent prophetic voice the messiah’s coming as forerunner to the Savior! Notice that it has been centuries since the Holy Spirit has been poured out on someone in Israel. God is again at work in Israel, and these two humble women are the first to catch a glimpse of the Holy Spirit’s workings in these last days. How exciting! God is on the move!

C. She is supremely blessed for believing God will fulfill his promise (v. 45)

Elizabeth’s first blessing of Mary identifies her blood relationship with Jesus (v. 42). Mary is supremely blessed among women because of the child she bears. Contemporary Jewish ideas usually measured a woman’s greatness by the greatness of her child. So because Jesus Christ is the greatest of all, then Mary is the most blessed among women. Elizabeth’s second blessing of Mary focuses on her faith acting in obedience to God (v. 45). Mary believed the word of the Lord like Abraham did centuries before (Genesis 15:6; cf. Luke 1:30-38; 11:27-28). Abraham had faith in God’s amazing promise for a blessed offspring to come and thus God counted his faith as righteousness. That is the greatest of blessings: to be counted righteous, approved, accepted by the one whose judgment matters most.

II. How Did Mary Know?

A. She knew from the Scriptures God’s heart (various OT passages)

The only sure way to know God’s heart is by repeatedly, habitually reading and meditating on what has revealed of himself. The Bible is the record of that revelation. In it God tells us his heart. Although a very young lady, Mary knew God’s heart because she knew every part of the Scriptures: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law (Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 3:15; Deuteronomy 4:34). The Latter Prophets (Isaiah 2:17; Habbakuk 3:18; Zephaniah 3:17). The Writings (Psalms 34:1-3; 111:9; 1 Chronicles 16:1).

B. She hid Hannah's Song in her heart (vv. 46-55; cf. 1 Samuel 2:1-10)

From the Former Prophets. Mary used language and themes parallel to Hannah's hymn-prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, whose son Samuel, the last of Israel's great judges, would anoint David as king of Israel. Mary borrows liberally from Hannah's Song, with an emphasis on praising God for his mercy, for his exalting the humble and humbling the proud, and for his disregard of sinful humanity's social order. Here she interprets the story of her life, her poor kinsmen, and the history of Israel through God's big story. It is a theological interpretation of what is happening in the story of the first Christmas. Mary as a faithful Jew knew the OT, but with Jesus in her womb she rethinks everything. And her heart begins to burst with humility and hope. Why? God is the champion of the poor, oppressed, and despised, giving hope in this lifetime for the permanent reversal in eternity. And he loves when those who are comparatively rich, those with privileges and advantages, use their power, wealth, and influence to minister to them. God's kingdom brings salvation. Hallelujah!

III. Do You Know Who Mary Knew?

A. Holy Jesus, as your Lord and Savior (vv. 46-49)

Nominal believers stumble and fall when they acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior only in a historically factual sense, but without any personal trust or heart devotion to Christ. Marvel at Mary's confession, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." She knows she is super-blessed and that God is doing great things for her. But she is not puffed up, entitled, or presuming her blessedness is based somehow on her personal holiness. Then there are our devout Roman Catholic friends who view Mary as the Queen of Heaven, a sinless co-redeemer with her son Jesus, who is an accessible motherly mediator for the faithful to get to Jesus the inaccessible manly mediator. Those who regard Mary as such will stumble and fall on her confession that she needs Jesus to save her too. My Lord and Savior: these are what it means to know Jesus' name as "Holy".

B. Mighty and merciful Jesus, as the righteous recompenser (vv. 50-53)

Mary's song is not merely personal. She also deals with theology and social ethics (vv. 50-51), politics and economics (vv. 52-53). These are key gospel themes in Luke, especially the proclamation of good news to the poor (Luke 4:18-19). The Lord will scatter the proud, dethrone haughty rulers, remove their wealth, and drive them into exile empty-handed. At the same time, God is faithful to lift up his lowly and humble servants. These are the outworkings of the gospel of Jesus Christ as God's kingdom comes from heaven to earth. The grace of God upends the wisdom of this world and the world system (1 Corinthians 1:26-28). Mighty and merciful Jesus will repay according to God's standard of justice, which is true, good, and beautiful. He is the righteous recompenser.

C. Covenant-keeper Jesus, as the helper of Israel (vv. 54-56)

Next she sings of God's covenant with Abraham which is arguably the overarching promise of the whole Bible (Genesis 12:1-3; 7:3-8; 18:18; 22:16-18; cf. Acts 3:25-26; Galatians 3:13-18, 24-29). Jesus' coming glorifies Israel as the bearer of the Savior, and his birth brings salvation to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32). Who will receive God's covenant mercy? The spiritual children of Abraham, namely those Jews and Gentiles who follow Jesus (Luke 3:8-9; 13:28; 16:19-30; 19:9-10; Acts 3:25). Mary's son is the fulfillment of the mystery of the gospel and the culmination of salvation history: Israel and the nations reunited as a new people in Christ. The hope of heaven is becoming reality! The Lord Jesus is the covenant-keeper. That is what it means that he is the helper of Israel.

Conclusion – Listen to this familiar passage in Luke 6 of Jesus blessing his followers. Don't tune out, but listen to Jesus. Listen as one who is poor in spirit, and maybe also not doing too well in other ways. And listen to his words freshly applied to how you feel in this worldwide pandemic: depressed, weary, lonely, fearful, beat-down ([Luke 6:17-23a](#)). Mary, did you know? Yes she did, with all her heart. Do you?