

# Christmas Made Personal

*3-Year Bible Reading Plan*

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**Bible Text:** Luke 1:46-56  
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This morning, I want to encourage you to turn in your Bibles to the gospel of Luke. Now typically in the Christmas season we turn to chapter 2, it's the famous Christmas story but today being a few weeks out from Christmas, I want to back up into chapter 1, and if you've noticed this morning with the carols that were sung, with the specials that were sung as well as played, there's a very clear theme when it comes to Christmas, the idea that Jesus Christ would one day for all of eternity be King. Now let's think about this from earthly perspectives. If a king were to come and he were to announce his presence, would you think there'd be a large audience? If a king were to come, in fact, we've seen this even in the temporal when a monarch from another country or another place descends to another, there is a great entourage, there is pomp and there is circumstance and everybody wants to pay attention.

But we know the message of Christmas is very different, in fact, the King that came, came in a very quiet manner, in fact, he came in a very personal manner, and today I want to speak to the fact that Christmas is very personal and what better person to look at in the Christmas story than the person of Mary. After all, it doesn't get more personal than her, does it? And yet oftentimes in this season when we focus on the character of Mary and what the Lord did through her, can we just come to a simple agreement that sometimes we give her just a little too much attention, but at the same time sometimes we don't give her enough, and so today beginning in Luke 1:46, we're going to read one of the most famous passages in all the New Testament, we call it the Magnificat, the blessing, the beautiful one. It's the prayer of Mary.

Now let me set the stage and the scene. She has not only had a very intense conversation with Gabriel, the angel, about that she is going to bear a child without a man being involved, she has gone to visit her cousin Elizabeth, discovered that John the Baptist has been in the womb for six months, and all the plans of the Old Testament, all the prophecies are coming true right there in their midst. When she begins to ponder upon these things, this is the prayer, the conversation we have with Mary and the Lord beginning in verse 46. It says,

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, 47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. 48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his

handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. 49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. 50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. 51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. 53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. 54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; 55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. 56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

It's a well-known passage of Scripture but as you heard through the music of the season, and we'll discuss it in just a moment, most of what she says is really not about what we celebrate at Christmas. Most of this prayer is not about the manger as much as it is about the cross and his Second Coming. And so when we talk about Christmas today on a personal level, let's look at how Mary digested the information and maybe she can assist us.

Let's begin with the persons that are involved. As I mentioned, this is a conversation, this is a prayer between Mary and the Lord only. Obviously she had a conversation with Gabriel, the angel, earlier. Obviously she spoke with Elizabeth, her cousin. There's a lot of conversations that are taking place but this one's special, this is that conversation that maybe you would have with the Lord maybe on the back porch late at night, or maybe early in the morning if you're one of those risers, when you're beginning to really truly digest what is happening in life, do you understand her profession here? In fact, I want to focus your attention on verse 47, "my spirit hath rejoiced in God," listen to this, "my Saviour." Why is that so critical? Why is that so important? Mary does not declare that which is in her womb as the Savior, though he is, how does she identify him? My Savior.

Now that's important because you don't need a Savior unless you've got a sin problem and she will be called blessed from generation after generation, and she was a willing vessel, and I daresay outside of Joseph will we find anybody more obedient to the Lord in what we know as the Christmas story. But she says "my Savior." You see, Mary recognized that Christmas wasn't just for others, Christmas was about her as well; that even though she was a chosen vessel, and even though she would be remembered now 2,000 years later for her obedience, it was the fact she needed that which is in her womb to save her from her own sins. In fact, in John 2, the first miracle of Jesus. Jesus is there at the wedding ceremony, gets information that they have run out of wine, and we know that people come to him and particularly Mary comes to him and says, "They have no wine. What will you do?" Jesus makes an interesting statement, he says, "Woman, mine hour has not yet come." Why is that significant? Because not only in the gospel of John but all throughout the earthly ministry of Jesus, when he said "mine hour," he wasn't speaking about the manger, he was speaking of the cross, and Mary understood and she grasped that that which was in her womb was more than the angels, the hillside and the manger. There was a Savior who was going to shed his blood not just for others but for herself.

I love what verse 5 of chapter 2 of John calls, in fact, I call this the sermon or the gospel according to Mary. She goes to the crowd there, the wedding, she says, "Whatever he tells you to do, do it." That's the only sermon she ever preached. It's pretty good, isn't it? Whatever Jesus tells you to do, do it. That is the one and only sermon of Mary.

And so you see that there is, shall we say, this profession she makes not only that he is the Savior but he will be her Savior, and then there's an interesting posture that she takes. It says in verse 48, "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." I mentioned, I think there are those at times that accentuate or place Mary in a little higher position than biblically is called for, but notice she says she will be called blessed. Why? Because he looked upon her in her low estate, an incredible posture that she takes. She realizes that she will be and is nothing without him who is within her.

Think about this for a moment. She is going to be ridiculed, mocked and made fun of by an entire culture who's not going to believe her story. Put this in today's context, a seventh or eighth grade girl comes home and tells her parents she's going to have a child but she's never known a man. How is that going to fly with the guidance counselor? How is that going to fly with mom and dad? Do you see the context here? Low estate? She was willing to be the mockery of an entire culture so that her Savior could be born.

Now what is that posture important? Because she recognized that there would be great things later, that she would be held high later, but her "greatness" and her, shall we say, attention is only because of he that is within her, nothing to do with her. I'm reminded in Ephesians 2:10, it says for we are his workmanship. Let me give you the illustration that Mary's demonstrating for us. A sculpture works with a blank slate of marble, a painter with an empty canvas and paints, the workmanship, that illustration in Ephesians 2 is that he's crafting, he is beautifying something out of our life when all we come to the table with is nothing. An empty block of marble, an empty canvas with nothing upon it and what does the Lord do? By entering our lives, he chips away that which need not be there so beauty is presented. He places the colors just in the right place so that the picture shows forth. When she says "my lowly estate and I shall be blessed from generation," what she is basically saying is by having a posture of humility, humbleness, and willing to be made fun of and mocked by all, God will do great things, not because of her but because of he that is within her.

Then she begins in verse 49 to make an incredible declaration or, shall I say, give us a perspective of who Jesus is, and remember the Christmas story really is beyond the manger, in fact, we're going to see in just a moment it's actually beyond the cross because a whole lot of what she speaks of is actually what we would call Second Coming imagery or items of what we call the Second Coming.

I want you to notice in the perspective she gives us of Jesus, how he is presented or the presentation. Now this may seem like a minor detail, some of you may be thinking, "Well, Jeff, you're kind of getting in the weeds here," but if you begin in verse 49, almost

every verse except verse 50 says "he hath, he hath, he hath." Now why is that important? Because when you look at that phrase "he hath" or "he has," you know, we can read all kinds of tense into that, can we not? Is she speaking of the today, is she speaking of tomorrow, is she speaking of days past? But what's interesting is all the statements, verse 51, "he hath scattered the proud," verse 52, "he has put down the mighty," verse 53, "he has filled the hungry," why is that important? Because every one of those statements is about the one who is in her womb who is yet to be born, she's speaking of future events as if they've already occurred. Now how's that for a presentation? Imagine in your life if you could speak of events in the future as if they've already occurred in the past. Throughout the Old Testament, if you want to get analytical, we call that the prophetic perfect, that only God himself can speak of a future event as if it's already occurred. An interesting presentation, it wasn't just about that which is to come in the days ahead and in the famous Christmas story, but as you'll see in a moment, most of what she says is what we refer to as the Second Coming.

Then we discover there's some very interesting properties that she claims this child to possess. Notice in verse 49, "he is mighty, has done me great things, holy is his name, and his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation." I want to notice the three things that she describes Jesus Christ as. Now remember, if you want to talk just from a biological perspective, the Incarnation, we're in the first trimester here, we're just getting started with the process, Christmas as we know it is at least six months away and what does she say? "He is mighty." It's the last adjective that I would use for a newborn babe, wouldn't you? In fact, what do we typically refer to as a new child? They're helpless, are they not? Can't feed themselves. Can't take care of themselves. They are dependent upon those who love them to do almost every single thing on their behalf other than breathe, and sometimes in the nick we have to assist there as well.

And yet here he is mighty. He is powerful. But notice she even goes on saying not only is he mighty but holy is his name. Now that's the last adjective I'd describe for a young child, holy. Why? Because we know that in our infant state of life, it's all about us, is it not? It's all about what we can grab, what we can have, what we can possess. In fact, the two first words humanity usually says is, "No," and, "Mine." Holy.

Distinct. Different. Righteous. Set apart. Merciful. Now that may be the most powerful word that she describes. Okay, he is going to be mighty. He is holy, but when she says merciful, by definition mercy means not receiving or getting what we rightfully deserve. What she is stating about that which is within her is that we don't deserve him. Have you ever thought about that for a moment? Within all the trappings of Christmas, the stories, the season, the songs, when it says that he is merciful listen to what Mary is saying: we don't deserve what he has come to do. We don't deserve his love. We don't deserve his attention. We don't deserve the fact that he would resist temptation, go to the cross and raise from the dead. We don't deserve it.

Those are interesting properties, one who is mighty, who is different and who is distinct, and is going to do on behalf of others that don't deserve it and will do so anyway. You see, we discover real quickly that her song really doesn't have a whole lot to do with her,

does it, as much as it has to do with him that is within her. And then there's some promises beginning in verse 51. Remember that statement "he has or he hath"? What are the things that are to take place in the days ahead, they are as if they've already occurred. Now they're very prophetic and I've mentioned even the songs of our season, the Christmas songs, "Joy to the world," is all about Jesus Christ reigning on the earth. "Let us adore him, Christ the King." And so, so much of our music, so much of our statements of the season are about that Second Coming and we see here beginning in verse 51 even Mary in her prayer says it's more than the manger, it is about his Second Coming.

Notice what it says. It says very prophetically in verse 51, "he will scatter the proud," verse 52, "he has put down the mighty," verse 53, "he has filled the hungry," verse 54, "he has helped Israel," verse 55, "he has spoken to the fathers." Now I want to put that in a very prophetic sense and very simply and shortly this morning. When it speaks of the fact that he has scattered the enemies, you've heard me say this once, you've heard me say it 100 times, there's an old bumper sticker that says, "Jesus is coming back and, boy, is he mad." When you look at the events toward the end of your Bible, you discover that when Jesus Christ comes one day as King, it is a somewhat violent affair. He takes those who are in opposition and he scatters them.

I mean, we talk about events typically not at Christmas but such as Armageddon, this final great battle between the Lord and those who are opposed to him, we don't think of that as a Christmas story but it is because Mary just said he's going to scatter his enemies. He doesn't do that in his earthly ministry, in fact, he loves those who are unlovable and cares for those that have been thrown away. He will scatter his enemies.

Notice that next verse, it says he will pull down the mighty ones. I love what it says in the book of Revelation, that the kings and the princes of the earth go up against him and all of them are defeated.

He scatters the enemies, he pulls down the mighty, but notice that third one, he will fill the hungry. You know, a lot of times I think we forget that the events of the Old Testament are actually a foreshadowing of the future. Let me break it down this way. If you want to know what to believe when it comes to Christianity and Jesus Christ, read and study the New Testament. If you want to know what's about to happen in the future, read the Old Testament. Don't read the newlines to find out what's coming, read the Old Testament because for every statement in the Old Testament that was verified as true and proven with the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, there are eight statements about things that have yet to come. Notice that famous story in the Old Testament where the Israelites find themselves out of Egypt in the wilderness, what does God do for them? He feeds them supernaturally, does he not? You know what happens in Revelation 12? That famous Antichrist character, he's chasing after the people of God and what does he do? He supernaturally feeds them again.

He will scatter his enemies, he will pull down the mighty, he will feed the hungry, then what it says, he will be a help unto Israel. You know, there's one of these passages in the Bible and when I say most misapplied, I understand it figuratively and metaphorically but

in Matthew 17, Jesus heals a demoniac young child, the disciples are amazed, the crowd is amazed, and Jesus makes this famous statement, he says, "If you will have the faith of a mustard seed, you will move mountains." How many times have you claimed that one? Jesus wasn't just speaking metaphorically, he was speaking literally. There is a time in the future the book of Revelation talks about, where the people of God are trapped by their enemies, they call out to God and guess what he does? He literally takes a mountain and he splits it in two so that they can escape.

He speaks unto the fathers. You know, in Hebrews 1 it says in days past the Lord used to speak to us by the prophets but now he speaks unto us by his Son Jesus Christ. Most of this famous prayer, this famous song is really about the fact that one day Jesus Christ is coming again, and why is he coming again? Because he has come, he has lived, he has died, and he is raised again, he's ascended on high. It is the next thing in God's great chronology of events. The promises aren't just prophetic, they're personal.

Let's look at Christmas through Mary's eyes. The scattering of one's enemies. You know, Mary and Joseph had quite a bit of enemies, did they not? Can you imagine what they were referred to as and called in their community? Scattered so much so that they would find themselves in Egypt for two years. I don't know how you define scattered but I call that scattered. How about the pulling down of the mighty ones? Herod who wanted to eliminate her own child and did so with all the other children in the community, he was brought down by God in a mighty way. Supernaturally fed, how do you think they had sustenance there in Egypt for two years? Oh, I remember, some wise men brought gold for them to pave the road. They are help for Israel, when the time came, they returned unto Nazareth and all along the Lord sent messengers to speak.

So let's turn it to our lives. Anything going on in your world you need scattered? Anything happening in your life that you wish the Lord would just dismiss and then not be a part of? Any opposition that you wish the Lord would take down? You need to be supernaturally fed? I don't mean with the physical food of milk and bread but spiritually? Anybody, don't have to raise your hands, say, "I sure could use some help right now." And how about, "I would do anything if God would just speak into the situation." You see, it's not just the story of days ahead, it's not just the story of this young lady 2,000 years ago, it's really our story as well.

So how is it made personal? You see, this entire story happens because of the profession that she makes. If she had not said, "within me is God my Savior," we would not have the rest of this account. You see, Christmas really doesn't become personal until when we realize why we celebrate it. It's not just about the food, the gatherings, the songs and such, it's the fact that we, like Mary, need a Savior. We have sinned, we have gone contrary to the things of God and we can't fix it. Now I want you to think about Mary again for just a moment. She's just a young child, middle-school aged from our perspective. How much "wrong" could she have done? If you've ever had a middle-schooler, possibly quite a bit. But in the big scheme of things, never made the headlines, did it? And herein lies the personal side of Christmas. I think one of our problems is we don't think we need Christmas because we don't have that big of a problem. If Mary knew

she had a sin problem, then who are we to say we don't? Mary cried out, "My God, my Savior." Christmas becomes personal when we do the same. Maybe you're here this morning, maybe you're here in person, maybe you're online that you need to make that same declaration.