

This morning I want to talk about Mary's song to the Lord, The Magnificat. It is a beautiful piece of poetry which could have been composed only by someone who knew the Lord very well, one who had a profound relationship with Him, but, in addition, it could only have been written by someone in the midst of a crisis. The author, Eugene Peterson, wrote, **it is during times of trial & tribulation, in the midst of "our disaster" that we write our best stuff, provided we're prepared.**

PRAYER

READ Luke 1:46-55: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts; He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

Mary was pregnant and she wasn't married. The Magnificat came to her in the midst of a true crisis, a disaster. Her life was a train wreck. Joseph, her betrothed, obeyed the angel and didn't divorce her. But that did not mean everything was okay. It wasn't as though she and Joseph could go around saying, "Oh, this is different because this one is by the Holy Spirit." That is NOT what happened!

In fact, 30 years later we discover the questions concerning Mary's pregnancy followed her until the end. As a case in point there were the religious leaders who tried to discredit Jesus by referring to his supposed illegitimate birth, saying, **"We were not born of fornication, but we have one Father, even God." John 8:41**

Mary's life was a train wreck. After the annunciation by the angel Gabriel she went to visit her elder cousin, Elizabeth, who was 6-months pregnant. When Mary came to Elizabeth, the baby in Elizabeth's womb had a physical revelation. We

read that he “leaped in her womb.” This was not a, “Put your hand here...did you feel that?” kind of thing! It was a LEAP! Whoaaa! Did you SEE that?!

Then we read, **Luke 1:41-43, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry (to Mary), ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?’**

Elizabeth said 3-things: First, Mary’s pregnancy was NOT a train wreck but a blessing for her. Second, Mary’s unborn child was blessed by God. And third, in Elizabeth’s words, Mary was “the mother of my Lord,” that is, the “mother of God.”

What the world said was a disaster for Mary was God’ saving grace for humanity! Mary’s disaster was only a disaster from a human perspective. What the world despises, was loved and cherished by the Lord. What appeared to be foolishness and downright craziness in human eyes, was the very hand of God in man’s midst.

Thus Mary composed her song, “The Magnificat.” Incidentally, it is called The Magnificat because of the first line. Mary said, “**My soul magnifies the Lord.**”

Luther wrote, “(Mary’s) words express the strong passion & exuberant joy whereby all (of her) mind and life were inwardly lifted up in the Spirit.”

Luther pointed out Mary did not say, “I exalt the Lord.” Rather, she said her SOUL exalted, her soul magnified the Lord. Luther said, “It is as though (Mary) said, ‘My life and all my senses float in the love and praise of God and in lofty pleasures, so that I am no longer mistress of myself; I am exalted, more than I exalt myself, to praise the Lord.’”

Mary proclaimed: “**My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant.**”

Mary’s spirit rejoiced with the joy of the Spirit of God who filled her, lived in her. The presence of God’s Spirit in her was a confirmation of His promise to never leave her, even in her disaster. In that moment she was filled to overflowing with God’s love, an abiding sense of His occupation of her heart.

There is no evidence that Mary ever had this kind of direct experience with God again. For all we know He never spoke to her or gave her a sense of His immediate presence after this one. However, we do know that she had God's Word and she had Jesus, her son.

Sometimes God gives people immediate, personal, spiritual experiences as He did with Mary. I have never had one, but we do not deny that it can happen. And when it does happen, it is an affirmation of God's love for us. However, these kinds of experiences must be held up against the light of the two things which God has given us all: His Word and Jesus, the two things which Mary also had, the two things which filled her with confidence and courage even to the end of her days.

In God's Word we read that **"We were buried therefore with (Jesus) by Baptism into death, in order that, just as (He) was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).**

Brother and sister, when you're feeling overwhelmed by your own disaster, when your life is a train wreck, you may look to your baptism and say with Mary, **"my soul magnifies the Lord!"**

God has given us His Word and He's given us Jesus.

In God's Word we read that Jesus said to the disciples as He served them the Passover meal, **"Take and eat, this is My body... Take and drink, this is my blood given for you for the remission of sins" (1 Corinthians 11).**

When the joy of the Lord in your mind and heart are overshadowed by the cares of this world, you may be lifted up and carried to new heights in your spirit as you receive Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. When you receive this gift with you faith, then you may say with Mary, **"my spirit rejoices in God my savior!"**

Luther wrote, "the Holy Spirit taught (Mary) this precious knowledge and wisdom, that God is a Lord whose work consists but in this, to exalt them of low degree, to

put down the might from their seats, in short, to break whatever is whole and make whole whatever is broken.”

Let us not think for a moment that Mary was a super nun who’s life was perfect. That would miss the point of her song. Mary was not perfect, but she was whole in the Lord because she walked with Him in faith. She believed in His Word and she believed in His Son, her Son, Jesus.

Mary said the Lord “looked on the humble estate of His servant.” Mary saw herself as God’s maidservant. She received God’s call on her life, and she accepted it wholeheartedly. Last week we meditated on her earlier profession of faith. She had said, **"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to Your Word." Luke 1:38**

That’s an excellent profession of faith in the only one who can save us from the disasters we will face in our lives.

Mary said, **“all generations will call me blessed.”** This was God’s revelation to her. The Lord had covenanted with Abraham 2,000 years earlier with the words, **“in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3).** In her mind’s eye, Mary saw the fulfillment of this covenant through her unborn son.

She said, **“He who is mighty has done great things for me.”** Luther said what he took away from this statement for himself was Mary’s way of pointing to God who did “all the work” on her behalf and on behalf of Israel, the church. Mary saw herself as God’s workshop. Thus, Luther said, I am but the workshop wherein God performs His work. I have nothing to do with the work itself.”

To be God’s workshop, a place where God is able to launch His ministry of salvation, love, and peace for all of the people in our lives, this is a noble goal for us all.

Let’s try to put this into perspective by reflecting on our own disaster, our own train wreck. What is it? Friends in Christ, the Lord has already filled you up with His salvation, love, and peace of mind! It’s all a matter of perspective. Like Mary we can also say, **“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant.”**

Let's say it together:

- **My soul magnifies the Lord** (My soul magnifies the Lord)
- **and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior** (and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior)
- **for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant** (for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant).

Friends in Christ, this week when we begin to think of our lives as a train wreck, let us meditate on how God can use whatever is happening to do something great in our lives and in those around us.

This week let us think of our lives as God's workshop. Let's pray that. Let's live with the knowledge that the Lord is doing special in and through us.

And this week may you have the opportunity to share this good news of God's work in your life with another person who really needs to hear it, in the name of Jesus. Amen.