

Jesu Juva

“Mary’s Song, Our Song”

Text: Luke 1:46-55

It is instructive to note who God uses to accomplish His work. Abraham was an idolater. Jacob was a heel and a deceiver of his own family - selling out his brother and then deceiving his father. Moses was a murderer, Amos a shepherd. Peter, James, and John were fishermen. And Mary - well, she was a nobody. Her claim to fame . . . well, she didn’t have any claim to fame. All we know about her was that she lived in Nazareth and was betrothed to a man named Joseph. If you were going to pick someone to be the mother of our Lord, Mary would not have been it.

But that’s how God works, setting us up for His biggest surprise of all - for who would be *the Saviour of the world*. A baby born not in splendor or glory, but in poverty and lowliness, in a manger, from a virgin who was on the verge of her fiancé divorcing her and putting her away discretely, to consign her to a life of quiet shame.

This one, God says, is the one. The Father of all mankind ***looked on the humbled estate of his servant*** and chose her. Not because she earned it or deserved it. That was as impossible for Mary as it is for you. No, this choosing was pure grace. Completely undeserved. All mercy. All of God and not of man . . . or woman. And so this maiden nobody would have ever heard of, becomes the one that ***from now on all generations will called blessed***.

Blessed, because ***He who is mighty has done great things for her***. For that is what it means to be blessed - to be the recipient of blessing from the hand of the holy one.

And you have been so blessed, though we do not always realize it. In fact, all people are so blessed. *God gives daily bread to everyone without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we pray that He may lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving* (Small Catechism, explanation to the Fourth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer). Mary did, and so said: ***My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior***. Even though her blessing began with an unexpected child and ended with the heart-piercing grief of seeing that fruit of her womb crucified.

So Mary received from the Lord *in faith* - in the faith that all from the hand of the Lord is for good, not for shame; for our salvation, not for harm. Sometimes that takes a lot of faith to believe, as you know from your own life. When it seems as if God is sending things into your life that are not good. Things that you’d really rather not have to endure. Things that bring hardship, suffering, pain, or grief. But just as God often does His greatest work through humble and lowly people, so He often does His greatest work

through these humble and lowly and seemingly-not-good things. Unexpected, and so marvelous and wonderful.

And example 1-A of that is not only Jesus, but the cross that He hung on. That God would give life by dying. That He would exalt by becoming lowly. That He would heal by being wounded. That He would make rich by becoming poor. That He would bless by becoming a curse.

But He does so because that's where we are. Dying, lowly, wounded, poor, and cursed. He comes to us where we are, to raise us to where He is; to do great things *for us*. And if we sometimes get too full of ourselves, too prideful, too much thinking that we deserve anything from Him . . . well, ***He'll scatter the proud, bring down the high and mighty, and send the rich away empty***, in order that He might be merciful, and gather us to Him, exalt us in Him, and fill us with Him. That we be truly blessed - not just with the things of this world and life, but with that which will last to eternal life. ***For His mercy is for those who fear Him, from generation to generation***. To the end of time.

So God filled Mary with Jesus. And He fills you with Jesus too. The same Spirit that overshadowed Mary and conceived a son in her, has come to you in Holy Baptism and conceived faith in you. God has done great things for you and you have been so blessed. And He who has done so, giving His Son *for* you and giving His Son *to* you, will not stop giving, and blessing, and being merciful. ***He helped His servant Israel***, and He helps you too. He promised, and sealed that covenant with the blood of Jesus.

So as Luther would say, we are beggars, it is true. But it is good to be a beggar when God is the giver and blesser. For then coming with nothing, we leave with everything, for we leave with Jesus. For that is the way of it with God. Come with sin, leave with His righteousness. Come in lowliness, leave with His glory. Come in poverty, leave with His riches. Come dying, leave with His life.

And when you know that, when the Holy Spirit has worked such faith in your heart and revealed this truth to you, the truth of Jesus, who could not break forth in song like Mary did? And so we will. ***My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour***, we're going to sing right now. For He has done great things *for you*.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.