

When the Holy Lifts the Lowly One

Luke 1:46-55

Our text is called the Song of Mary or simply the Magnificat (Latin for “My soul magnifies.”). The words form one of the most ancient Christian hymns, and it has been part of Christian worship for 2,000 years.

- The Magnificat has been part of worship liturgy since the early days and remains so even today.
- For centuries, members of religious orders have recited or sung these words on a daily basis.
- The Magnificat forms the longest section of personal speech by a woman in the New Testament.
- You could also say that the Magnificat is the first Christmas carol ever composed.
- Parts of Mary’s Magnificat echo the song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10) and words from the prophets.
- In the past century, there were at least three separate instances of governments banning the public recitation of it: (1). India in the 1920’s, (2). Germany in the 1940’s, and (3). Guatemala in the 1980’s. The British in India, the Nazi’s in Germany, and the oligarchs in Guatemala felt it empowered the people.

Before Bonhoeffer was executed by the Nazi’s, he preached a sermon on the Magnificat and said of it: *“This song has none of the sweet, nostalgic, or even playful tones of some of our Christmas carols. It is instead a hard, strong, inexorable song about the power of God and the powerlessness of humankind.”*

I will break the song down into three sections. The first section has two sentences, the second section three, and the third section two. So it goes 2 - 3 - 2 - for a total of seven magnificent sentences in it.

I. There is confidence within the lowly one because *there’s a belonging to the Holy One.*

(1). *My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.*

Until the God of the universe becomes my God in this time and space, there will be instability.

(2). *For He has had regard for the humble state of his bondslave; for behold, from this time all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty one has done great things for me.*

The mighty things God has done for me include giving me His Son and withholding nothing good!

II. There is courage within the lowly one because *there’s an understanding of the Holy One*

The last phrase of the first section and the beginning phrase of the next is - **Holy is His name.**

Holy speaks of something being ‘a cut above.’ God is superior in His nature and character. Holy is He.

(1). *His mercy is unto generations and generations to those who fear him.*

To fear is to revere. God is central and everything else revolves around Him. This is wisdom.

(2). *He has done mighty deeds with his arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts.*

Those who see themselves as central “are scattered.” That means that their stability is broken.

(3). *He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble.*

Mary would have been familiar with all the ancient wisdom that acknowledged God’s power.

III. There is contentment within the lowly one because *there’s a trusting in the Holy One.*

(1). *He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent away the rich empty handed.*

This is upside down wisdom. Those who are hungry in this life for righteousness are filled.

(2). *He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.*

God is able to keep his promises and He is faithful to His people regardless of our infidelities.

May your soul learn to praise the Holy One who has stooped down and lifted the lowly one!