

“Blessed Mary” (Luke 1:47-55)

And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me -- holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”

Mary sang this song when she met her aunt Elizabeth.

One day, an angel appeared to Mary. “Don’t be frightened, Mary,” the angel told her, “for God has decided to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus.” Mary asked the angel, “But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin.” The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! For nothing is impossible with God.” Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May everything you have said come true.”

And she visited Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she prophesied. And Mary sang this song.

This song of Mary describes a person who is blessed.

1. A person who rejoices for being the Lord’s servant is blessed.

We don’t like to be servants, do we? We feel as if we would lose something if we were to be servants. We think the work of a servant is demanding but not profitable. We can’t do what we like to do. We can’t say “No” to what we don’t want to do. Surely, it may be like that in the world. So we are not happy to be the Lord’s servant either.

But Mary said this, “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.” She called herself the Lord’s servant.

The Lord’s servant does the work of the great God, in God’s authority, by God’s power. Sometimes the work is hard. Sometimes we can’t get the result we expected. We may not receive any benefit ourselves.

But the Lord’s servants know that their work will bring God’s righteousness into this unrighteous world. They give themselves to God and see His mighty works through them. The weak will be strengthened. The people who have been oppressed and marginalized will be treated justly and fairly. Those who were troubled, wounded and heart-stricken will receive the Lord’s comfort, healing and deliverance.

And they will rejoice for they are used by God to realize all these wonderful works of God. They are the blessed people.

2. A person who knows the Lord is with them is blessed.

Mary said, “From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me.”

What were the great things the Mighty, great God had done for Mary? It was for her to conceive Jesus.

People all over the world rejoice and celebrate Christmas in memory of Jesus’ birth. This morning we also gather together, sing joyful songs, and later we will have Pot Luck lunch together. That’s wonderful! We are so blessed! It’s great.

But Mary was not called blessed because she was in that kind of happy rejoicing situation.

If we thought about what she would experience from then on, we wouldn’t think she is blessed at all.

At that time, she was pledged to be married. According to Deuteronomy 22, if a virgin pledged to be married sleeps with another man, what the man did was to violate another man’s wife. Both of them must be stoned to death (Deut 22:23-24). It’s impossible to rejoice because she is in danger of being stoned to death.

Even if she could escape from stoning, what about the feelings of Joseph, her fiancé? Who would believe if she said an angel appeared to her and said such and such and it turned out like this? It would just sound like a fairy tale. She might have worried, “If he still marries me, then what would he think of me? Can we really be a husband and a wife? Will he accept this child?” The more she thought about these things, the more she might have become worried.

And what about Mary’s family? Others would think, “Their daughter is so immoral! She returned home from the trip pregnant!” They would also suffer contempt and backbiting of others.

In this situation, Mary saw herself blessed. It was because the Mighty, great God has done great things for her.

Mary knew that she was in the mighty power of this great God. She knows that the Lord will not leave the weak and the oppressed. This God took notice of me. He is with me. Or He lives in me! So I am blessed. From now on all generations will call me blessed.

3. A person who trusts in the Lord’s mercy is blessed.

From a human perspective, Mary has just started to fall into bottomless misfortune. No matter what she does, she can’t escape this miserable, sad life. There is no hope to be found. To human eyes, it definitely looked this way.

But the Lord’s mercy never fails. “Even in a situation like this, God will surely protect me and sustain me.” Mary thought.

It seems impossible to man, but it is possible for God. She knows it through experience. She has assurance. She has no doubt. Because she is pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And shew also knew how merciful God was to her ancestors. The kingdom of Israel left God, and started to worship other gods. They were taken to Babylon. But God didn’t forget his mercy. He left the remnant and made them rebuild Jerusalem.

The descendants of Abraham became slaves in Egypt. God heard their cry, had mercy on them, and set them free.

God, whose name is holy. How can He forsake me? How can He desert me, once I’ve given myself to him saying, “May it be to me as you have said.” Mary trusted in the Lord’s mercy. God’s mercy never fails. She was blessed.

Today we learned about a person who is blessed from the song of Mary.

A person who rejoices for being the Lord's servant is blessed.

A person who knows the Lord is with them is blessed.

A person who trusts in the Lord's mercy is blessed.

May I ask you a question? Are you blessed this morning? Do you want to live as a blessed?

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. (Isaiah 9:2)

Jesus said: I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. (John 12:46)