

Momentum for Life 1 Devotion or Worship of God
Luke 1:46-56 December 27, 2009
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Introduction: Two ways to live your Life 1st is Bottom up approach this is where you are the center of the universe. When things are good you project up to God. Things are good and God is a good God! But when you go through hard times, because you are the center you begin entertain thoughts like is God good? Is there a God? Maybe, I am on my own. Maybe, God just doesn't care. The problem with the bottom up approach is life is just so uncertain. When you are the center of the universe you are going to find yourself wanting or lacking -it's just inevitable That is exactly why for us to have momentum for God we have to find a different approach. Because, life is so complicated, it becomes clear you are not the answer. Or the things you have built around you to make you feel you are the answer let you down. When this happens and you discover you are not the center of universe instead of running to God you run from God!

So to truly have momentum for life we need the second approach and that is the top down approach. This is where God is the center of everything and you are devoted to Him. He is the source, the Bible is

true, and reveals the truth about God and God is the source of all life. This allows you to see God is God, that there is no yin and yang with God-he is good all the time! With him there is just one way. So when things happen to us as they are bound to in this broken world. When suffering, sickness and we are sinned against we realize our circumstances have changed but the God of the universe has not Changed! James has put it this way: *Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:16,17 NIV* So when our circumstances change for the worse we do not question God, instead in faith we say things like God is good, so how is God going to take this bad circumstance and turn it into a blessing?

Today, we are going to look at Mary who experience much sadness and suffering in her life. When we look at Christmas story we need to understand a few things about Mary. Clues we have from history would say it was likely Mary was about 14 just a young teenager.

Mary receives a dramatic but scary revelation. She lives in a tiny Town of Nazereth about the size of Elbert. Mary was poor and likely illiterate. She betrothed to be married to another teenager called

Joseph. In the middle of her preparations for a wedding an angel shows up and says God has a better idea, you are going to give birth to the savior of all mankind. At this time as a confirmation that she is not crazy, she is told her relative Elizabeth is also pregnant and will give birth to John the Baptizer the forerunner to Jesus. This was a miracle as well because Elizabeth was elderly and barren.

Mary is excited for this confirmation so she takes a long journey to her relatives house. This is the background to today's Scripture Luke 1:46-55 please turn there.

1. Replace Worry with Worship.

Now if you think about it Mary had a lot of reasons to worry, She had justification to make the universe about her at this time. All of her plans and dreams were being set aside for God's agenda. She would have been concerned that Joseph would abandon her when he found out she was pregnant. We know as an adult the accusation was leveled at Jesus that he did not know who his father was. So that means at least for the whole life of Jesus that Mary lived under the accusation that she didn't know who Jesus father was either. So she had her reputation to be concerned about. The Law said she could have been stripped, clothed in rags, spit upon and beat. Whore may have

been a term used by the other women in community to describe her. And what about her family would they accept this newly given vision? What about the pressure of being a Jr. High age child who is going to give birth? So if you think you have worries today consider Mary. It could be Mary had as many concern as what you have right now. It could be that Mary had a season of worry. But instead she chooses to devote her life to God. Instead of Worry she chooses to worship. Instead of living life from the bottom up, she chooses to live life from top down. I have no idea what you are worried about today-but if you are human you worry. But I also know you can choose to worship instead of worry. You can choose to devote life to please self or devotion your life to God! I am not trying to trivialize your concerns but from Mary's example we can see how to turn our worry into worship. You see this is possible because we are all made to worship-to be devoted to something or some one. You may not worship the God I worship-but you worship. God is a worshipper, because trinity exists in perfect fellowship-enjoying and serving one another. As humans we all enjoy and serve some one or some thing. With out God as our focus we inevitably worship idolatry whether it is creation or our new car. But those false God require a lot of care and propping

up I.E. lot's of worry! But when our focus is on the true God, life itself becomes an act of worship that replaces worry. One tool to help you do this is a simple daily reading plan either in the bible or a devotion book to help you remember who you should focus on . So let's look at the truths Mary focused on to turn her worry into worship!

A. He is the Lord

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord Luke 1:46

In essence Mary is saying even if Joseph leaves me, I am hurt and my family disowns me you are Lord and I will do your will! Giving God his rightful place is the start of biblical worship. We exist to serve god-not God to serve us. If you are worried and distressed turn it to worship by giving God his rightful place: maybe by praying the perfect will: Your will be done in my life as in heaven.

B. He is the Savior

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior Luke 1:47

Some Teach that Mary was a perpetual virgin and was without sin-If that is true she would have not declared the need for God to save her from sin! Second truth that helps us turn from worry to devotion, is too look at our own sin and just how weak we are! It is a reminder there is only one God in the universe and we are not it!

C. He Knows me.

For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. Luke 1:48
Pride is refusing to accept God's gifts or taking credit for what God has done; humility is accepting the gifts and using them to praise and serve God. Don't deny, belittle, or ignore your gifts. Thank God for them and use them to his glory. Mary's first reaction I am certain was concern bordering on worry that she would not be able to conceive, carry and birth the savior of the world. But she takes that reality and turns it to worship by acknowledging that God knows her better than she does. If God thinks she can do the task-she will trust him to equip her. When God asks us to do something he does so because he is our creator and knows our gifts and abilities better than we do-It is worship when we say I feel unworthy and unable but I will trust your power. Are you worried about a task God has given you? Don't worry-in worship say yes to your God!

D. He gives me Dignity

From now on all generations will call me blessed, Luke 1:48

In a society where women were a little higher on the totem pole than a cow! Where poverty and youth were held against you. Mary realizes God so loves her he gives her a task that after it is completed will give

her the blessing of dignity forever.

But saying yes-meant that the world would shame her! Gossip about her! That her family would heap indignity upon her head. This is the secret of a top-down approach, you don't try to please everyone, you only dance for one and that is God! That is worship! When God is blessed in this life and the next to those you know his goodness will be dignify you.

D. He is Mighty

or the Mighty One 1:49

Is there any mightier act than conceiving Jesus in a virgin womb through the power of the Holy Spirit! So Mary understands that this is a mighty act of God-if it is up to her it will not happen. When we are facing impossibility there is no better help than devoting some time to remembering all the mighty acts of God from creation to the parting of the Red sea. It is helpful to pray *the words of Jesus: It is impossible with man, but all things are possible with God!

E. He is for_me

has done great things for me 1:49

Let's recap the vision given to Mary by Gabriel she is going to have a son who is to be named "Y'shua" (we know Him as Jesus). This son is

going to possess the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob forever.

His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom.

Now that does sound like good news.

She is going to become pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.

But here is the rub - she is engaged to be married to Joseph.

She hasn't been fooling around with him or anyone else.

So, if she is going to be pregnant, this is not going to look too good.

How would you react to such news?

I know how I would react...

"Lord, this is rather inconvenient at this time."

"We have no insurance."

"As you know, Lord, Joseph and I are not fully married yet, and he is

not going to be real happy about this."

"Lord, the community is not likely to see this as a positive thing...they will probably be lining up the stones."

"Lord, can I get a second opinion?"

Well, that is how you and I might respond to this surprising news.

But Mary's worshipful response is much different. Mary considers herself the unlikely object of God's favor.

She is a simple, unpretentious peasant girl.

How could God possibly do this with someone as absolutely common as she? So when God's plan overrides our worship do we worshipfully say they will be done- or do we raise our voice and say just a minute.

F. He is Holy

holy is his name 1:49

God's nature, his essence is holiness. He is completely free from sin, and his ways are not our ways. He is separate from and exalted above the creature. All his attributes are perfect, and they all cohere in a perfect harmony called holiness.

2. He Replaces Covetous thoughts with Devotion

Covetousness is closely related to greed, avarice, excessive desire for money, or the desire for another's possessions. I think one of the key words to remember here is the word "desire." To overcome covetousness one must control desire. You will always covet other people's life, things and situation if you make yourself the center of the universe. In essence that is why we sing and come to church it helps us make God the center of our life. Do you have a plan for 2010 on how to become more active in your involvement in church-are you regularly in song counting your blessing. Because when God become your center, in worship you will become more grateful for all that God has given you!

G. He gives Mercy

His mercy extends to those who fear him, 1:50

Mary understands a God who is so holy and pure to choose one so common and sinful is an act of mercy. And what Mary finds is that God looks down on those with mercy whose heart and mind are filled with a reverent regard for Him. Mary also discovers that it is the blessing of God that truly makes us rich. And every blessing is an act of God's mercy.

H. He extends mercy from Generation to Generation

from generation to generation. 1:50

If I had been God, I think I would have given up on Israel long ago.

That is not meant to be an anti-semitic conclusion.

It is a conclusion that reflects my own wandering heart as well.

The only consistency these people showed was their consistency to willfully sin. They kept breaking God's law and wandering from God's will. God consistently works in conjunction with His past acts.

He is determined to continue His mercy.

So, now in Israel's distress, the Messiah is coming.

It is mercy again.

It is God's tender love in action, flowing from the throne of grace.

The covenant promise made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David still holds. God is faithful, and that is worth singing about! So Mary does sing in worship.

I. God is Powerful

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; 1:51

But Mary is not the only recipient of the great things of God. God has always been doing great things for his people. The Bible is full of stories of the great things that God has done on behalf of his people. And so, God's people sang in Psalm 126, "Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.' The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad." And in Psalm 71, "Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?"

As Mary shows us, it is right to praise the Lord for the great things he has done for us. And, if by God's grace you have turned from your sins to trust in Jesus Christ, God has done, is doing, and will continue to do great things for you.

J. He is Sovereign

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 1:51

Living under the rule of Rome was oppressive.

Mary had to wonder Why bother fighting the system?

It is easy to believe that nothing ever changes!

Look at the system that Mary was born under.

Rome was a society built on an elite, racist, and oppressive system

that ensured that the rich remain rich and the poor remain poor.

It was a system that took advantage of the handicapped, diseased

widows, and orphans.

There was no welfare, no affirmative action, no food stamps, and no

Social Security.

Nothing would change.

Yet, Mary realizes that this is no longer the case.

Guess who wins in God's program: the arrogant, mighty, and rich, or

the humble and hungry? In

worship she declare God's rule would overcome all of man's

oppressive rules! When we face unfairness-injustice do we just

throw up our hand and say why bother or do we worshipfully work to

bring about God's sovereign rule?

K. He is Gracious

He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. Luke 1:52

God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore

submit to God. James 4:6-7 (NKJV)

Humility is not thinking less of yourself - it is thinking of yourself less.

Mary knew that she would now live her whole life under a cloud of suspicion from her family and neighbors. Embedded in her decision to be fully submissive to God's call was the willingness to suffer possible ridicule, loneliness and contempt. God chose her and she submitted to His will.

L. He Provides

He has filled the hungry with good things Luke 1:53

"Hallelujahs" occur when we stand in awe of what God is doing for us personally. Mary stood and sung, "He has filled the hungry with good things . . ." There can never really be true worship of God until we understand what God has done for us personally. It is one thing to come to the Lord's table and see what God has done for the salvation of the world, it is quite another to see what God is doing for me personally. It is one thing to stand with the saints and shout songs of praise to God, but to sing praise for what God is doing in my life, well that is real praise.

M. God is Just

but has sent the rich away empty. 1:53

Mary sees her Baby and what God is doing as good news for other lowly and hungry people of the world. And her baby is also a warning for the rich and powerful who misuse their gifts. Because of God's just He will scatter the arrogant, pull down the mighty and send away the rich empty. God will also exalt the lowly, fill the hungry and lead his people by the hand. This is literally seen in the life of Mary who is a nobody, whom God makes a center of history, See's her own son feed thousands with bread and fish and from the Birth of Jesus to his death we see God leading this humble woman. One way we devote ourselves to God is asking the question; do we identify with the nobody's or the somebody's? But just asking the question is not

enough, then we must reflect God's justice by feeding the hungry, spend time with the nobodies of this world and then look for God in the lives of the least expected!

3. Replace Anxiety with Devotion to History

If you read v51-53 they are in the past tense- they sound as if they are talking about something that has already happened. And in a sense that's true - God has always acted in history to save those who are humble and hungry for him and bring down the rich proud and self-sufficient.

Mary as we said more than likely illiterate so how was she so versed in history? Worship! Every Passover told the Story of God and his people Israel. A Visit to the synagogue or temple was a trip down memory lane. True worship is grounded in history-because it is history. We need a plan on how to be devoted to God in 2010-Our family needs a plan of worship-one way is to center our holidays and celebrations on what God is doing for us and has done in the past.

N. He has proven he is Merciful

He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful Luke 1:54

But our God is a God who loves sinners. It is seen in his patient with Israel and us. He came to Mary, not because she was so perfect, but purely out of his grace and mercy. And that same God comes to us.

Mary called God her "Savior," and he is your Savior too. God did great things for Mary, and God also does great things for you. Instead of condemning you for your sins, God sends his Son, who takes your sins away. Instead of condemning you, God has mercy on you, and forgives you, just as he had mercy on Mary.

O. He has Proven he is Faithful

to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers. Luke 1:55

Mary put her hope in the promises of God. She undoubtedly knew scripture, from the words she is singing. She had heard the stories passed down through the family about a God who had promised a savior - a messiah. She knew that God was faithful. Notice what she said in verse 55: He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever." Mary knew the promise that had been passed down from generation to generation. That one would be born of the seed of

Abraham who would save people from their sins. She realized that she had been chosen - of all the women who had ever lived - to be the mother of that child. As an Israelite and devotion to her history, in faith she knew God would provide.

P. He is Eternal

The song of Mary looks back on the promises made 2,000 years

earlier to her ancestor Abraham, and it sees all of the events

coming to fruition in her life as a fulfillment of those promises. Talk

about long-term perspective!

If we don't get an answer to our prayers in 15 minutes we become

anxious and are offended that God isn't listening to us. Woe is me!

God doesn't care about me - why should I care about him. I'm not

going to church anymore.

Move your eyes off your belly button and see the big picture - the

long term picture - "He has not forgotten his promise to be

merciful." Because He is eternal his purpose will come to fruition.

Conclusion: What has 4 legs and an arm? A happy pit bull.

What makes you happy? There may be more than a million answers to that question. Some say money can make you happy, that marriage can make you happy, that divorce can make you happy, that a new house/car/boat, can make you happy, that family can make you happy, that religion can make you happy. What or Who would you say makes you happy? Happy-comes from happen stance-or another way of saying it is when our situation is good we are briefly happy!

Mary's song makes it clear she has more than happiness she has Joy because God is her center. Mary takes a worrisome situation and turns it into a joyful worship song. Because she lived life from the top down approach (Putting God First). If you are ready to put God first-

come up front as we stand to sing!