

**May 9, 2010**  
**Luke 1:46-56**

Alright good morning again and Happy Mother's Day. If you will, grab your Bibles and instead of turning to Titus this morning, turn to the gospel of Luke with me. We will be back in Titus next week, but today – even though I don't usually break from the study we are in for holidays like this – this year I want us to take Mother's Day as a chance to look at the mother of Christ before we get back into our study on the family of Christ – His church. So we'll be in **Luke chapter 1 verses 46 to 56** in a moment.

I guess with some apologies to the Roman Catholics, it is interesting that in Scripture, Mary herself is a rather minor character – even in the Christmas story. She appears here as the young woman chosen to give birth to the Savior of the world and she'll appear a few more times throughout the ministry of Jesus, but even less is said about her there than here. And then she pretty much disappears from the biblical record. We know nothing of her life after the resurrection other than the fact that she was counted among His disciples. We don't know about her death. Even with what we'll look at today, we really don't know much about her personality or her history. Two of her other sons were big shots so to speak in the early Christian movement – James and Jude – but she is never mentioned in connection to them.

So she is given this great honor and this momentous role in human history and in the plan of redemption, but then she departs the stage. And yet all that being said, she is a wonderfully attractive figure here in the New Testament. How even in the history-altering event of the incarnation of Jesus Christ – God coming in human flesh to accomplish man's redemption, an act that is divine work in all of its parts, God drew human beings into it and made them part of it and essential to it.

So today, let's consider Mary's example as a Christian and as a servant of the Lord – the title she gives herself in verse 38 a few verses before our passage today. We'll look at Mary's Magnificat today – the hymn that she wrote or sang that is named for its first word in the Latin translation: Magnificat anima mea Dominum: my soul magnifies or glorifies the Lord. Let's look at it together: Luke 1:46 TEXT

What we cannot help but see when we read this is a magnificent example of a theological state of mind and life. When you hear "theological" as a word – it is used so much in the church – that we automatically skip over it and don't think about what it means so a lot of the times we don't know what it means. When I say a "theological state of mind and life" – "theological" is just having to do with the nature and will of God as revealed to man – having to do with *theos* – the Greek word for "god."

A better way to think about this and what God wants us to see is **Mary's example of a GOD-WARD mind and life**. Think back to our study of **Colossians** and possibly the key verses and the key transition in that letter is **chapter 3:1-4** which says:

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

We find that in Mary in these verses: a theological mind and life – a God-ward mind and devotion – so if you want to know how a Christian ought to think about everything, you can hardly find a better example than Mary here. And I don't just mean for mom's today. Men and women have different callings in life and in certain aspects of the Christian life there are applications that are unique to each gender – but in general, the life of faith is exemplified throughout the Word here and there by a man then a woman with no distinction made between them. So dads, guys, join me and the women today in longing for a double portion of what we're going to see in Mary. Just three things today.

First: **Mary immediately and comprehensively interprets her circumstances BIBLICALLY. Her thinking is defined by the Bible** – her mind is shaped by God's Word.

Let me explain that. One of the things that can blow you away if you've got your brain on when you read this is knowing that a Hebrew girl in her teenage years was able to compose a hymn like the Magnificat. When you were 13, 14 years old, anyone bust out hymns of praise like this? Yeah – me neither.

But what we see here is the language, the phraseology, even the sentences and expression of God's Word itself strung together to make a new song. The psalms, scattered expressions from what we call the Old Testament, and especially the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel all show up here in Mary's song. In fact, as Robert Rayburn points out, in many editions of the Greek New Testament, the text is printed so that material that is seen as a citation of an Old Testament text is placed in bold type. In those editions of these verses here in Luke, there are only two lines and some scattered words that aren't in bold type.

So what should astonish us is not that so young a girl could think and give voice to such thoughts, but that so young a girl was such a master of the Word of God. Mary clearly had been taught the Bible at home and studied the Word for herself. And she did so not dispassionately, but as if the Bible was written for her.

She had so mastered the Word of God that she was well able to turn her own remarkable experience into biblical expression and explanation. She thought in biblical terms about her own life and about everything else. **Everything in her mind was shaped by the truth, by the concerns, by the interests, by the manner of GOD'S WORD, because she had taken that Word into her heart.** And so, when out of the abundance of her heart her mouth spoke, as it does here, she gave vent to her feelings in Scriptural language. If the Scripture is the expression of God's mind, Mary's mind had become like God's mind because of its absorption of the Scripture.

I've told you the long standing truth that when you cut an Aggie, we bleed maroon. But it used to be said of John Bunyan – the author of Pilgrim's progress – that you could prick him anywhere and you find bible; likewise of Charles Spurgeon that the Word of God ran in his veins. And that's what we see here in Mary. What a great mother she would be for Jesus growing up – but how much does Jesus long for all of us to be like her in this aspect of her God-ward mind? But folks, **the prerequisite of this characteristic is that we CONSUME the Bible like she did.** That we take it in – that we absorb not only its matter, but even its way of speaking – that soon we think like the Bible and speak like the Bible because out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks and we have hidden God's Word in our hearts. **We too should be so consumed with the Bible that we speak BIBLICALLY.**

Secondly – Mary's theological – God-ward mind and devotion is revealed here in the fact that **Mary saw everything – including her own amazing experience – in terms of God's love for His CHURCH, His people, and His commitment to their salvation.**

You may have picked up on this when we read it, but I want you to notice that Mary begins by praising God for what He's done for her. She gets that she – among all the women of the world throughout time – had been singled out for this incredible honor. And understandably, she expresses her wonder and amazement and thanksgiving at that. But in the rest of the passage in her song – **in the majority of her response, her own personal situation and even blessing is forgotten and what occupies her mind is the significance of what she has been told for the PEOPLE OF GOD.** And in the climax of the song she sings not that God has helped her, but look at it – verse 54-55

*He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.*

The incredible grace God was pouring out on her she took to be grace God was pouring on His people. Her gift was for them – her joy for them – her honor was God’s means of bringing salvation to the world.

And what’s more, you read this and Mary seems genuinely happier – more pumped – on the Church’s behalf than even on her own. See part of Mary’s knowing God’s Word was an acute awareness of the condition of God’s people. And with all her heart she was waiting for the redemption – the rescue of Israel. She loved God’s people and her prayers were not only the prayers of a teenage about friendships and love and romance, but for the people of God – for His church – for His Kingdom.

Oh how we need to learn that from Mary today. That **by the grace of God and a growing mastery of His Word we feel that nothing brings us the greatest joy and happiness that does not in some way advance the interest and glory of the KINGDOM of God in our world.**

That’s not natural for us is it? Or maybe I shouldn’t speak for you – it is not natural for me. And for the teenagers I know – no offense guys – but it would have been natural for us to expect Mary to be utterly preoccupied with herself and what’s happening and what it means for her and her own blessing in this passage. That she turns so quickly from herself to God’s church I think is one of the great examples of the forgetfulness of self that Jesus would later say is an identifying mark of His genuine followers.

And then finally, the third element today of Mary’s theological mind and God-ward focus is seen in the way that **the GREATNESS of God colors or affects all Mary’s thinking about HERSELF.**

I’m sure you know that there are a lot of people who at least profess to be Christians who think of Mary more highly than they ought. There are circles and churches where she is given a role almost like that of Jesus – as some sort of mediator between God and man. Though Roman Catholics are quick to say they do not pray to Mary, they just ask her to pray for them – many of the more honest of them will admit that there are vast multitudes of Catholics who do pray to Mary as if she is somehow more accessible than God or more likely to answer or whatever. But that is something that is simply not taught in the Bible. In fact it is something that is in direct conflict with what is taught in the Bible. And maybe the simplest reminder of that is in Mary’s own words.

In the opening sentence of her hymn she declares that she is a person who needs a Savior. The idea that anyone would ever think of her as one or some form of one would have been utterly incomprehensible to her.

If you want a simple test of the state of Mary’s mind – her God-ward focus – specifically of the relative places God and she occupy, just count the pronouns. Notice how many more “he’s” there are than “me’s” – how many more “his’s” than “my’s” there are. I want us to see this. **Mary was small – low – in her own eyes not primarily because of how clearly she saw her SINFULNESS** – though I’m sure she knew that but it was not what she gave prime expression to.

Again, as Robert Rayburn put it: *“Her pure and holy form of humility was based rather on her exceedingly high view of God. She saw herself a humble servant because she saw him a Great King. She spoke with such animation of God’s mercy because she knew how great a thing it was that Almighty God should be merciful to her.”*

She was humble – small – in her own eyes **because of her exceedingly high view of GOD.**

Again thinking back to ourselves as teenagers, we probably wouldn’t expect to find ourselves having just discovered that we were miraculously pregnant with the Savior of the World to be singing of the mighty power of God in scattering the proud and bringing down rulers from their thrones or defending

His people. But that was Mary's view of God. Listen – what God had done for her – as marvelous as it was – was as she knew simply part and parcel to what God always does. That's how God rolls.

What had happened to her startled her not because God could not or would not do such a thing – that wasn't a problem for her – but that a God as great as our God would it for her.

Folks – I want us to want to be like Mary in this, too. To rejoice and celebrate in Jesus and to have the greatness of our God even more than the wonder of what He does for us preoccupy our minds. **We too should always see the MAJESTY of God behind what happens in my life – in the world – to see and TRUST His power and wisdom and goodness and, above all, His mercy.**

Now don't get me wrong – I want us to know and acknowledge that we are miserable sinners – we have to - I want us to know how great our salvation truly is. But I want my and your humility before God to be mainly based not on my sense of the enormity of my sin, but on the enormity of my God – I'm humbled more by my sense of God's greatness than of my badness.

So church – this Mother's Day – **what Jesus wants us to SEE in Mary is what Jesus wants us to WANT in ourselves – the same theological life – the same God-ward mind set – that Mary had.**

**God wants the Word of God to SHAPE all our thinking and all our speaking and all our responses and all our singing and all our decisions and all our hopes. Is that true of you?** If the only way that is possible is to read and absorb and be in the Word, what are you doing to make it happen? I'll just be blunt folks – if the only exposure you have to the Word of God is thirty minutes with me once a week – and you're ok with that – you don't know what this is. **That's what LEARN TRUTH as one of the steps of life in Christ is all about** – put yourself in situation after setting after opportunity to hear and be taught the Word like Sunday morning Bible study classes – but you've also got to get in it yourself. If you've stopped or haven't started REAPing with us this year, go to the web if you need the info and start or re-start today. Let your thinking be defined by the Bible – your mind shaped by God's Word.

**God wants a church and Kingdom-mindedness to largely DEFINE our perspective on life. Is that true of you?** Do you always think of yourself in terms of what matters most to the Lord? And again in bluntness – how can that ever happen if it has no expression in your life? What I mean is if in your life there is really no commitment to – no faithfulness in – no service to – no giving toward – no sacrifice for the church – the physical present manifestation of God's Family and His Kingdom – then you don't get what this is all about. **That's what BUILD COMMUNITY as one of the steps of life in Christ is all about** – putting yourself in situations and opportunities to connect and build relationships with individuals in the family of God and to serve and build up and support that family and God's Kingdom

If you're not sure that if you missed 3 Sundays in a row that anybody would call you – you can sit back and point fingers at others for not reaching out to you or you can admit that that reality says more about your desire or lack of desire to connect with God's family and to value His church than anything else. Talk to a staff member about getting in a LINK, grab a couple friends and start one yourself, look for opportunities to meet needs – serve others – be in ministry - reach out. Develop the God-wardness where your greatest joy comes in the expansion and glory of God's church.

Finally **God wants us to have a sense of the greatness of God so much so that our VIEW of ourselves is in light of our view of Him. Is that true of you?** Does your view of life and your value and everything about you come out of your understanding of the majesty of your God? One more time in the bluntness we all need to hear today – if the highest priority in your life is your comfort and your way and your wants – if it's just your world and we all live in it – then where is the greatness

of God in that? God's greatness begets our humility – God's blessing begets our thankfulness – God's kindness to us begets our kindness to others. **That's what WORSHIP JESUS as one of the steps of doing life in Christ is all about** – putting yourself in corporate situations designed to both inspire and give opportunity for seeing and honoring the glory of our King. So if you've disengaged within your Sunday morning routines here – if your songs are rote – your prayers are empty – your giving is reluctant – then re-engage the reality of Colossians 3 again: *Since then you've been raised with Christ – set your minds – set your hearts on things above not on earthly things.*

See Mary's example of a theological state of mind brings us right back to the vision that God has given us here at Fairway of doing life in Christ one step at a time together and the steps of that life in Christ. **Mary's example of GOD-WARD thinking and living reminds you that when you too Worship Jesus – Learn Truth – and Build Community – you, like Mary, cannot help but be used by our great God to REACH YOUR WORLD.**

Which aspect of a theological state of mind and life do you hear God aiming your heart at first? If the Spirit is speaking to you, then you respond, today.