# The Gospel of Mary

Will Fitzgerald  
Kalamazoo Mennonite Fellowship  
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Mother’s Day

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

50 His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

51 He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

53 he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

54 He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever.” [[1]](#footnote-1)

triple-division: verses 46-49, 50-53, 54-55

Jane is heading out to go to a movie. Thor, in IMAX 3D. “Hey, Jane, what should I teach on?” I don’t really mean it, for I’m pretty sure what I want to talk about. But she says, “Mary.”

“Mary? Why?” I ask.

“It’s Mother’s Day.”

Suddenly, I think this is a very, very good idea. Mary is the Theokotos, the God-Bearer, the Mother of our Lord Jesus. And so, on this Mother’s Day, it is well worth our time to consider her as an inspiration and model mother. There’s so much we could say, but let’s concentrate on one passage.

Luke 1:47-55 contains Mary’s song of adoration, often called “The Magnificat,” after the first word in the Latin version. Let’s read this together from our pew Bibles. Let’s each read one verse, and then move to the next person.

Mary starts our magnifying and rejoicing in God. Of course, Mary can’t literally magnify God, make God bigger—well, except very, very literally, as she bears the God who is growing in her womb. But just as she provides nutrition and haven for the unborn Jesus out of the her body, as every birth mother does, she takes the time to remember God, to given God what God is due: to praise God for what he has done. And this brings her joy—she is the kind of person who rejoices in her spirit when she magnifies God.

So, let me ask you mothers, and ask all of you—what is special about how a mother praises and rejoices in God? What examples of godly mothers have you seen who magnify the Lord and rejoice in God?

Mary then tells us why she is magnifying God and rejoicing, and it’s for a very personal reason. She is a nobody—and certainly, in her time and culture, so she would have been considered. Among her own people: she was young, she was a woman, she was unmarried, she was pregnant and not married. Among the Romans, she was just a Jew. But she knows something that they do not know—that God doesn’t look with the same eyes that people do; in fact, almost the opposite: God has looked at her *in her lowliness* and regarded her with favor, and she knows that her being blessed will be remembered for all generations. And so have all generations called her blessed! Her prophesy was true! She knows that God has done great things for her.

So, let me ask you mothers, and ask all of you—what great things has God done for you in your mothering or being mothered? How have you been blessed?

But Mary doesn’t stop there—she knows that God is not just a God that deals strictly on an individual level—although God does care about each individual. She knows that God is a God for all generations, all times, and in all situations. And God seems to have what is sometimes called a preferential option for the poor:

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

53 he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

She is pleased that God looks on her in her lowliness, but she recognizes that this is God’s standard operating procedure. God provides for the lowly, the hungry, the meek. If God is magnified, if God is “on high,” then when God lifts up the lowly, it seems to me that God is expressing a preference to hang out with the lowly, hungry and meek ones, even as the haughty, full and proud ones sink down away from God’s presence.

So, let me ask you mothers, and ask all of you—how have you seen God’s preference for the lowly in your life or the life of mothers you have known?

Finally, Mary acknowledges her place in the overall salvation plan of God. She is bearing the One who will bring salvation to Israel, and to all Abraham’s descendants. This One she is bearing will be the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham. We know that, as great as this is, that the fulfillment of the promise will go way beyond the bounds of the physical descendants of Abraham, to all who become a spiritual descendant of Abraham through faith. The center point of God’s salvation story is happening in Mary: Christ is coming to be born, to live and teach, and to die, as we read in Book of Acts and in Romans. How blessed she is to play such a central role!

But those of you who are mothers, and all of you—how have you seen the work of God take place in your mothering and your being mothered?

Sometimes, the Magnificat is called “The Gospel of Mary.” And Mary does bring good news: God considers us in our lowliness, works on our behalf, and fulfills the promise of salvation in us and in our children. Mothers, and all who are called to nurture others: I commend to your consideration and example Mary, the mother of God, who rejoiced in her place in God’s redemptive plan for the meek and faithful.

1. *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version*. 1989 (Lk 1:46–55). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)