

Treasuring Jesus With Mary | Reading: Luke 1:46-55; 2:19

Mary's song of praise here contains the fruitful praise of a person who truly knew the one true God! Instead of being overwhelmed by the circumstances Mary enlarged her vision of God & she sang these beautiful words in which I count 21 things she declares about God.

When the circumstances of life are overwhelming or when God calls us to something that seems out of our depth it's time to enlarge our vision of God like Mary. It's time to sing of his greatness & character. Mary sang **"My soul magnifies the Lord"**! **"My soul"** indicates this song came from the centre of her being. She was magnifying God with all she was and with everything she had. 'Magnify' means to exalt or enlarge. Of course we cannot add or take from who God is, but we can enlarge our vision of him, praise is one way we do so. In praise we can pull together all the great truths we know about God.

EVERYONE CAN KNOW GOD

The reason Mary knew God so well was because she treasured his word in her heart! This is very evident from her song that is saturated in Scripture! There are echoes from Hannah in 1 Sam chapter 2. There are also quotes or references to verses from Genesis, Deuteronomy, 1 and 2 Samuel, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk and Zephaniah. It almost seems like she tried to squeeze the whole OT into her song. God's Word was written on her heart! She had been raised on the Scriptures. She had learned them at home and heard them read and preached in the Synagogue. And it is clear from her song she treasured all she heard in her heart. So when the Holy Spirit moved in her life she was able to offer God the right kind of praise. The more understanding we have from his word the more reason we have to praise & trust him. This is why when the circumstances of Mary's life seemed so overwhelming she was able to enlarge her vision of God.

Note that Mary was probably at most 15 years old. At such a young age Mary had a wonderful grasp of who God is and for this reason she was able to offer the most beautiful worship. Mary had both a simple childlike faith AND a deep knowledge of God! What makes this even more striking is that she was likely illiterate, as a woman of her time & culture she wouldn't have been permitted to study with the men. So she would have had to store what she heard in her heart. She had a lot of disadvantages.

Some of us may be prone to think that in order to know God we need to become a theologian, a philosopher, a scribe... but Mary knew God more than most of the wise and learned of her day. This emphasises to us that *all of us can know God deeply & equally*. God can be known by anyone! We can know God. It is not the 'smartest' who know God best, but the humblest. Mary's humble heart was a treasure chest of truths about God. What an example she is to all of us. Let your heart be humbled & let it be full of truth about God! This humble illiterate teenage girl knew God so well. What hope she offers to all

of us that God can be known by anyone! The key to knowing God like Mary is not firstly more reading, or study, but more treasuring!

EVERYONE NEEDS A SAVIOUR

Mary not only treasured the written word of God, but she also learned to treasure her Son - God's Son - the Word who became flesh! When the shepherds came to visit Jesus they shared what the angels had told them about him. And it says in Luke 2:19 that **"Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."** Then later on in the chapter when Joseph and Mary had to go back to the Temple to find the 12 year old Jesus; they found him listening to & teaching the scribes to the amazement of all who were there. Mary asked Him **"Son, why have you treated us so?"** Jesus replied **"Why were you looking for me? Did you not know I must be in my Father house?"** It says in 2:51 **"And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart."** Mary has a heart that treasured Jesus, may God give us such a heart for such a heart treasures what the world needs most. Mary treasured everything that was said about him, as well as everything he said and done! We also ought to treasure all the Bible says about Jesus!

While Mary is a shining example of true faith & devotion to God here she is not the hero of Christmas, or Christianity. The hero is the One who lived within her, the One she treasured – Christ Jesus the Lord! There is no doubt Mary knew God's favour in a very unique way, she was **"blessed among women"**. No one else will ever share the great privilege she had of carrying Jesus in her womb, giving birth to him & raising him as her Son. However Mary did not see herself as a mediator of any kind, nor is that idea found anywhere in Scripture. Talking of God's desire for all people to be saved 1 Timothy 2:5 declares; **"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."** Jesus alone is hero & mediator because he alone gave himself as a ransom for all.

Mary understood herself to in need of a Saviour! She sang; **"My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour."** She said **"my saviour"**. Like Mary all of us need to come to the point where we *look to Jesus & personally say "my saviour"*. If the girl chosen among all women to carry the Saviour confessed she needed him; then surely we all do. Mary was a good person by human standards, we know nothing bad about her *but she knew she was a sinner in need of a saviour*. Surely if Mary the **"highly favoured"** one needed a saviour then we all do. Romans 3:22-23 confirms this when it says; **"There is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."**

EVERYONE CAN BE A CARRIER OF GOD

No one will ever share the unique privilege Mary had of carrying Jesus, the hope of the world, in her womb. However we can all become carriers of God in another way. In Acts 2 after Peter had preached the people listening were deeply moved & asked; **"Brothers, what shall we do?"** Peter said in v37-39 **"Repent**

and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” We can all become carriers of God because Jesus gives the gift of his Spirit to every heart that is willing to receive his Word. Mary carried the reality of God in a very unique way, but we can all be carriers of God in a very special way by receiving his word & Spirit into our lives. As Paul writes in 2 Cor. 4:7; **“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”** Our God chooses jars of clay to be his chests of treasure!

We are prone at times to put a lot of hope in national, religious & world leaders & we always end up disappointed, but God has chosen to make his home in very humble & very ordinary people, people like you & me & Mary, so we can be carriers of hope & healing in a broken world! Mary experienced the reality of this in the most profound way! She said in v48 **“for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed.”** This is how God works! As Mary declared in v52; **“He has brought down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of humble estate.”**

God delights to dwell not in the mighty, not in those see themselves as powerful, not in those who are great in their own eyes. No, he delights to dwell within the humble, within the most unlikely of people from the most unexpected places. He delights in dwelling within the overlooked, rejected, despised, unqualified & even disqualified! Within those willing and humble enough to see their need of him & receive him! God’s precious Son dwelt within a poor, humble, illiterate, ordinary teenage girl & God’s precious Spirit & message dwells within us if only we are willing & humble enough to believe (treasure) the gospel & say with Mary; **“Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”**