

Mary's Magnificat

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Texts: Luke 1: 46-55

Dear God, My soul magnifies you, my soul thirsts of your living water. I rejoice knowing that you are within us, that we are works in progress and nothing can separate us from your love. Loving God bless the words that I speak today, may they be of blessing and love. In your name I pray Jesus amen.

Wow, Mary Mary, thank you for providing us with this ancestral song that is passed and lived through generations and generations.

I decided to preach from the magnificat because I think this is a fitting text for our theme this advent as we keep slowly coming into the birth of Jesus.

This beautiful song that Mary left for us has SO much, but today I want to talk about the prophetic memory present in these words. I know we spend a lot of the further seasons speaking and testifying to the external Jesus in scripture. Oh, the places Jesus will go, we know. But today, in our text, Jesus is still yet to come to this world and we have Mary carrying him.

I want us to dwell just a little longer in the internal experience that our liturgical calendar gives us in this season of advent. Let us dwell a little longer in the part of the story where Jesus is still in Mary's womb, where there is still literally physically Emmanuel within Mary's

I grew up with the story of Jesus' birth, but rarely did I remember listening to Mary's song and praise. Maybe it was my tradition growing up that did not take the time to look at it, but as I was preparing in worship and meditation I realized this is a Mary that embodies strength and reclamation of who God is for her and for her people.

I wanted to share something that I read in a small section from the amazing book *We Cry Justice: Reading the Bible with the Poor People's Campaign* that talks about Mary's Song and the author of this section is Massachusetts activist and organizer Savina J. Martin.

Martin beautifully describes Mary's Song as the Song of Revolutionary Mothers. What I love about Martin's interpretation is the way she describes this as a song of salvation with political, economic and social dimensions that cannot be blunted." end quote

She also lifts up how the government of Guatemala in the 1980s also recognized the subversive nature of Mary's Song. The government found Mary's proclamation— that God is especially concerned for the poor— to be so dangerous and revolutionary that it banned any public recitation of Mary's words.

Wow, I mean wow. Imagine having a song being so dangerous because of the liberation it can bring! When we read interpretations of this text it always talks about the perfect submission of MARY, but I cannot help but wonder why did Mary submit? Why Mary, did you allow this? Now do not get me wrong I am glad she did, but as a woman I always wondered why did you accept this?

This is why I love Luke and the details he provides about this story. So, let us go Back a couple of verses before, this is after Mary gets the visit from Angel Gabriel and he announces to her that she will have a child and Mary asked him how could this be so verses 35-45

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called [b] the Son of God. **36** Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. **37** For no word from God will ever fail."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, **40** where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. **41** When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. **42** In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! **43** But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? **44** As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. **45** Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

I know that a little bit more than just a couple verses back, but I wanted to share this context because this is what speaks even more to Mary's songs as a revolutionary song. In these verses we see a Mary that asks questions back and her submission does not go with a weak "okay" or yes thank you no, Mary replies with a call of accountability. She had the last word to the angel and she said well, "May your word to me be fulfilled." And then she goes to Elizabeth's house and after experiencing the leaps of joy that her presence with Jesus within her that caused John the Baptist while in the womb leap of joy. Could it be that maybe just maybe in this moment Mary realized that we are all connected and that indeed God was within her.

This opened an access to memory and access to the prophetic promise that God made to generations to come.

I know I mentioned prophetic memory at the beginning and I promise I have not forgotten about it, but I wanted to cover a couple of things first before talking about the way that prophetic memory might be reflected in this text. I have come to learn from my beloved Latin American community that we have experienced what it feels to be taken away from our memory and connection to our own history and roots. And out of this lacking memory robbed by the oppression of colonialism it is hard for us to remember who we were before being colonized.

Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo describes the decolonial act of ecclesiology found in prophetic memory is "the way communities refuse to accept the colonial version of the past and its implicit vision for the future, it is a way to reclaim their own historical memory and an important ingredient of their resistance to the violence of imperial oppression."

And why am I continuing to elaborate around prophetic memory, Mary's magnificat, and the revolutionary song of salvation that she gave us? You might be like Carla what in the world? Thank you for bearing with me, and I hope this makes clearer sense in a minute.

But you see, the way that I see all of this coming together is the micro moment that Mary had right before delivering this song. I know this is not something we have in the text, but I cannot help but wonder if what Mary experienced right in that moment was a contact to her prophetic memory. A contact with what Abraham saw with the cosmology of generations to come. Maybe she experienced the memory of liberation and the promise of salvation after years of oppression. We know Mary and Joseph were not rich nor were they in high ranks in society. She knew the cry of the poor because she was one.

And in this moment Mary decided to not accept the past of oppression in her but she decided to create and own a new vision for the future. Mary was reclaiming the salvation that might have been lost in the fragmented past. In this song we see a Mary that is calling out for liberation as she realized she was carrying justice itself within her womb.

I wonder if Mary has been feeling that need for that cry of o'come o'come even before her pregnancy with Jesus. But that is why she was able to say these words, because she was in the slow waiting for justice and when she felt and saw the confirmation she could not help but proclaim it.

I will close with a final interlocutor whose words that I LISTENED RECENTLY TRULY stuck with me. A couple of weeks ago I had the honor to introduce Representative Jones from TN as he was going to give a talk at the Div. School. And among many inspirational and prophetic truths that he said that afternoon there is one thing that stuck with me that I was reminded of when I read Mary's song. Rep Jones said how we often use the phrase saying we need to speak truth to power but rep Jones said that day one thing that will always be with me he said how about we change that saying no, in power we speak truth.

And this is what Emmanuel God within us makes us feel. It makes us feel the power and strength of an upside-down kingdom that uses unconditional love as power for us to speak the truth that is needed to bring justice. Mary was not speaking these words to power, but she felt the power within her that gave her the strength to speak this truth and proclaim this promise for justice and liberation

So, how about beloved that In our o come o come we stand in power speaking crying, in our silence, pleading this coming of life, a coming of truth, a coming where the hurting bodies and souls will be lifted, where our internal struggles will have midwives along our side by a community of love that carries us while we deliver our burdens saying do not be afraid! Do not be afraid because God is within us, God is within us. And so, we wait just a little longer, but in the meantime, we visit homes of our loved ones, we share moments where we experience leaps of joy or moments of grief, all in all knowing that the promises of Hope • Peace • **Joy** and Love are present.