

A pastor once told the story of telling his three children bedtime fairy tales. He went to the room of his 7 year old, and said, "Once upon a time, there was a boy who was in bed. He heard a knock on the door. He got up to answer the door. He opened the door, and there stood a dragon." The seven year old's reacted with wide eyes.

He then went to his 4 year old. He said, "Once upon a time, there was a boy who was in bed. He heard a knock on the door. He got up to answer the door. He opened the door." The four year old reacted with wide eyes.

He then went to the 2 year old. He said, "Once upon a time, there was a boy who was in bed. He heard a knock on the door, and he got up to answer the door." With that the two year old reacted with widen eyes.

The point the pastor made was that the older the children become, the more it takes to draw out their sense of awe. For the 7 year old, it took a dragon. For the four year old, it took opening the door. For the two year old, it only took getting up to answer the door.

The longer we live Christian life, and the longer we hear of God and the Bible stories, why does it take more to touch our sense of awe in who God is? When we do have that sense of marvel at who God is, it is leads us to worship Him. How much does it take you to where you respond in your spirit to worship our God?

Our text this morning is Luke 1. We will be reading from verse 46 to 55.

At this point in her life, Mary could not be older than 16. One source has her as young as 13. She has received a visit from the angel Gabriel just as Zechariah did. Instead of arguing, however, Mary totally submits to God's plan for her life as laid out by Gabriel.

*"Behold, the [\[ab\]](#) bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."*

I wonder if she thought about what just happened. I wonder if she thought, "How is this going to go over to this community?"

This could not only be an embarrassment to her family, a misunderstanding to God's purposes, a divorce from her soon-to-be husband Joseph, and life threatening to her own self. She needed confirmation. I think that is why she went to see Elizabeth. Confirmation, she received it.

Mary's heart burst forth into this song that is one of the purest expressions of worship found in scripture.

Luke 1 :46-55

*<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:*

*"My soul exalts the Lord,*

*<sup>47</sup> And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*

*<sup>48</sup> "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondslave;  
For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.*

*<sup>49</sup> "For the Mighty One has done great things for me;*

*And holy is His name.*

*<sup>50</sup> "AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION*

*TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.*

*51 "He has done mighty deeds with His arm;  
He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.  
52 "He has brought down rulers from their thrones,  
And has exalted those who were humble.  
53 "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS;  
And sent away the rich empty-handed.  
54 "He has given help to Israel His servant,  
In remembrance of His mercy,  
55 As He spoke to our fathers,  
To Abraham and his descendants forever."*

This song tells us some things about Mary. It tells us that she was very knowledgeable of the Old Testament for a 13-16 year old, especially from an "ole girl." I say that not as my view of Mary, but from the societal context in which Mary lived. Her knowledge of scripture was not merely head knowledge, but that which saturated her life in such a way that it flowed from her in this song of praise.

In her song are references from Psalms and Isaiah. There are echoes from the words of Hannah, the mother of Samuel; and Leah, the wife of Jacob. Leah did not have Jacob's heart to begin with, but she had a heart devoted to God.

In this song, we learn that worship is an expression of praise that flows out from within to the revealing work of God.

Worship is an expression of praise that flows out from within to the revealing work of God.

Now that is a Gary Reeves definition of worship. I don't know if you will find that anywhere in any theological textbook. I get that definition from this song. I want to give you three teaching points from this passage that is in that definition.

## **Origin of Worship**

By that phrase, what I seek is from where does worship come. Does it come from the body of mankind, the emotion, or where? It cannot come from the body of mankind though worship will affect our physical lives. Worship cannot come from emotion of mankind though worship will affect the emotion of man.

Mary tells us the answer in the very first sentence. "My soul does magnify the Lord." In verse 47, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."

It is a spiritual thing. Worship originates from the spirit of mankind. Remember what Jesus said, "You will worship in spirit and in truth."

Often soul and spirit are used interchangeably. They have to do with the inner person. It has to do with the focal, central point of our being from which everything else flows.

Proverbs 20:27 - *The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, Searching all the innermost parts of his being.*

It is the spirit of man that is dead in sin, but it comes alive when we surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. When our spirit is brought to life, everything changes.

Paul talks about the inner man.

*"But though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."* 2 Corinthians 4:16

Paul prayed, *"that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man."* Ephesians 3:16

External worship is shallow. It is a superficial observance. The Bible tells us that such worship is intolerable to God.

*"This people draw near Me with their mouth and with their lips they do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me."* Isaiah 29:13

That is a dishonor to God.

Would it comfort you a little to know that pastors sometimes come into worship with our spirits not prepared for worship? When stuff happens, sins are committed, our spirits are not in tuned to God to properly worship. Often the experiences of the week in our encounters with God in daily living prepare us for worship or does not prepare us for worship.

Prayer is essential to prepare our hearts for worship. Prepare our hearts to encounter God.

## Expressions of Worship

Expressions of worship are the manners in which worship is done. Expressions come in form of words uttered through proclamation of the Word, through testimony of our experiences, through singing of hymns and songs, and through prayers. Expressions may come in forms of non-verbal communication, such as giving of offerings, listening to the words of sermons, prayers, songs, reading the Word, or simply being still and quiet. That's a hard one for some of us. It is when we get quiet, that the Holy Spirit talks loud. You don't hear Him with physical ears, but you hear Him in your spirit, your soul. Years ago, when we were in Georgia, a daycare worker came in my office. She said, "I need to get some place quiet. She sat in my office as I continued working on Bible study and sermon preparation. After about three minutes, she said, "I have to go. It's too quiet in here." I said, "It's quite noisy to me."

Notice some of the expressions that flowed from Mary's spirit.  
My soul exalts the Lord. My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

Not only are expressions made, they are made in a state of humility and selflessness.

He had regarded the humble state of this bondservant.

But it wasn't just the social status that describes her. Although she does say she was a woman of low estate, and that does refer to her sort of humiliation as a state of being, it isn't limited to her social status. It has more to do with her spiritual character. She recognizes she is a sinner. She recognizes she is a sinner. She's unworthy. How can God, the Mighty One, who is perfectly holy, link up with this woman? It's just... It's more than she can comprehend. She doesn't have an exalted view of herself; she has an exalted view of the Lord in a humble view of herself. It just staggers her that God would come to her, this humble nobody, this bond slave. It staggers her that all generations in the future are going to look back at her and note the unique and singular blessing that God bestowed upon her when the Mighty One did this great thing of planting the Messiah in her womb. And staggering thought of all thoughts, He's holy and He still is interacting with a sinner. Just beyond comprehension.

Only in state of humility can we have the encounter of the Mighty One as Mary proclaims which allows her to glorify and worship even more the object of her worship. Worship is an expression that flows out from within to the revealing work of God.

## Object of Worship

Who is the object of Mary's worship?

He is God her Savior. V 47

He is the Lord. V 46

He is The Mighty One. V. 49

Holy is His name. v.49

He is God of mercy. V 50

He is One who lifts the humble and humbles the haughty. V 52.

In no way is Mary exalting herself. Instead, she is exalting, worshiping our God.

The worship was because of who God is as He reveals Himself through what He has done. Her encounter with God was one where she saw the awe that is of God. Mary reacted in a song of worship. At that point, society's reaction didn't matter. How her family would react to the news didn't really matter. The possibility of Joseph divorcing her didn't really matter. I wonder if even the possibility of facing a brutal death really mattered at that point for Mary. Instead she worshipped.

Author Philip Yancey describes a moment of profound wonder and awe in Alaska's wilderness. He was driving down the road when he came upon a number of cars pulled off to the edge of the highway. Like any of us would have done, he stopped to see what everyone was looking at. Yancey describes the scene:

"Against the slate-gray sky, the water of an ocean inlet had a slight greenish cast, interrupted by small whitecaps. Soon I saw these were not whitecaps at all, but whales—silvery white beluga whales in a pod feeding no more than fifty feet offshore. I stood with the other onlookers for forty minutes, listening to the rhythmic motion of the sea, following the graceful, ghostly crescents of surfacing whales. The crowd was hushed, even reverent. For just that moment, nothing else—dinner reservations, the trip schedule, life back home—mattered. We were confronted with a scene of quiet beauty and a majesty of scale. We felt small. We strangers stood together in silence until the whales moved farther out. Then we climbed the bank together and got in our cars to resume our busy, ordered lives that suddenly seemed less urgent."

When was the last time you had an encounter with God that left you in a sense of being overwhelmed by God such that it led you to pure worship.

You may be having that encounter with God right now. He is revealing your need for Him to receive forgiveness and experience the cleansing power of Jesus Christ. To be rescued from sin by our powerful God.

Needs met this past week that can only be explained by a powerful God.

He is Lord. He is Savior. He is the Mighty One. He is holy. He is God of mercy. He lifts the humble.

Worship Him. Worship Him.