



Luke 1.46-55

Introduction

- Protestants shy away from RC/Orthodox excesses, but Mary really is important.
- The Magnificat may be the Bible's greatest song of faith and the clearest expression of the heart of the gospel.

What God has done for Mary (v46-49)

- Becoming pregnant as an unmarried teenager was no joke. M was also given a huge responsibility that she must have felt incapable of carrying through.
- Bitter, fearful and overwhelmed?
- No, she responds with praise and thanks, and an "unrealistic" confidence that God will bring about untold good through her:-
"From now on all generations will call me blessed."

What God "has done" for others

- M also sees the wider implications of what God has done for her. She sees that God's mercy will actually extend to all who fear (revere, respect) him for all generations.
- The series of past tenses in verses 51-54 seem puzzling/optimistic. Has God really scattered the proud, brought down rulers, filled the hungry etc?
- Mary is speaking prophetically, with the eyes of faith and with a deep understanding of God's priorities and purposes - justice, compassion, a breaking down of pride/riches and other barriers to fellowship with God.
- Mary knows that *SOMEHOW*, the new life that God has put in her womb will bring about the answer to pain, suffering, evil and injustice.

How is Mary an example/inspiration for us?

- Mary's relevance to those of us living today goes way beyond devotions to paintings, carvings or statues of an idealized, saintly woman. It comes down to our deepest fears, needs and insecurities and shows us the way out.
- Perhaps you can think of a time in your life when you were anxious, uncertain, overwhelmed. Perhaps something like that is going on for you now.
- When you are in that kind of place it makes a difference if you are a person who shares the faith of Mary. A person who can say "my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."
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- = A person who believes that God performs mighty deeds and fills the hungry with good things. A person who believes that God has put his new life in them, his Holy Spirit, to transform the way they act and cope and live.
- OR, perhaps you can think of an "insoluble" world problem - AIDS, economic meltdown, terrorism, the extreme poverty of much of the world's population.
- When we think about these problems it makes a difference if we are Christians, people who share the faith of Mary.
- = people who believe that God is all powerful and that he values justice, integrity, peace and love above all things. That he has come into the world in the form of a human being in order to radically change the way things are and has poured out his Spirit to enable us all to live in a new way, a way which advances the influence of the Kingdom of God on earth, day by day. It makes a difference!

Not so easy?

- You might be thinking it is not so easy to have the faith of the New Testament's Mary, or even the faith of a vicar, a religious professional!
- This is where the Church comes in. You are not alone! Mary herself had Joseph to support her and later, after the trauma of the cross, she was part of the earliest Church community (Acts 1.14).
- The Bible makes it clear that the Church is not just a random collection of individuals who happen to hold similar religious beliefs! We are here for each other; we are meant to be dependent on each other.
- I'm very happy to see this mutual support in prayer and action already happening fairly strongly at St G's (...*examples?*) and I'd be happy to see a lot more of it!
- Together we can grow in the faith that Mary had in the Son of God who she was carrying in her womb when she sang this great song of praise.
- Together we can praise God for his past, present and future mercies and live in a new way which transforms the world into God's Kingdom.

Let's take on board the Magnificat as *our* song, *our* hope, *our* prayer by saying these words together now, with confidence... Luke 1.46-55!