

Worth Our Praise

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Date: 24 December 2023

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 1, Christmas is a big deal to a Christian. Well, it's a big deal to most, you know, with the busy shopping, the gifts, the decor, fla-la-la-la-la, all those things that make it up and it's fun and it's family.

Christmas ought to be a really big deal to the Christian because of the real meaning of Christmas. It's this time of year when we acknowledge the virgin-born incarnation of Christ and without him, we'd have no hope at eternal redemption.

But the biblical account of the birth of Christ also serves as a wonderful teaching guide for us in our lives.

Teaches us some great spiritual truths that I just felt led this year to focus on. Over the last few weeks, we've looked at the events that preceded the birth of Christ.

And we first learned about the preparation of the Lord, that John prepared us for Jesus. And Jesus prepared us for the Holy Spirit.

[1 : 11] And the Holy Spirit prepares us for the return of the Lord. And last week, we learned from the narrative that we can trust God. God will provide. We can rest in that.

And don't know what you're dealing with today. Don't know what you're uncertain about. But I can promise you, God will provide. He's faithful. The prophecies of Christmas proclaim that.

And today, I want us to look for just a few minutes at a model of worship that's found in the preceding passages in the Gospel of Luke.

When we learn a lot about how to worship, how to respond to God, we grow in the Lord. And we have that opportunity to do that when we pay attention to what we read.

Today, we look at the mother of Jesus. Her name was Mary. And the song she sang in the midst of her joy and in the midst of her humility upon finding out about her pregnancy.

[2 : 15] Something pretty powerful. Luke chapter 1, beginning in verse 39, it says this. In those days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to a town in Judah.

And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.

That's John the Baptist. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she exclaimed with a loud cry, blessed are you among women. And blessed is the fruit of your womb.

And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

And blessed is she who will believe that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. And Mary said, my soul magnifies the Lord.

[3 : 21] And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed.

For he who is mighty has done great things for me. And holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He's shown strength with his arm. He's scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He's brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate.

He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring.

The summary of the song of Mary is, the Lord is worthy of our praise. And if you pay attention to the words in which she says there, she prophesies a lot upon what Christ actually would be.

[4 : 28] And how because of who he would be and the difference he would make, we have a lot to give him praise for. I just want to look at a few this morning. Mary praised him because in Christ, his

strength empowers our weakness.

How overwhelmed Mary must have felt. We truly can't imagine what was going through her mind. There's been some who've tried to figure that. A song that probes into that, you'll have the opportunity to hear tonight as well, is a song called Mary Did You Know.

Great questions that Mark Lowry wrote in that song. We don't know what she knew. But we know from this song, we know that she knew that this was a mighty act.

And she knew it was done only by the hand of God. She knew it was a holy act set apart by God before the foundation of the earth. She also knew it was an act of mercy.

That God himself in human form would come to build a bridge so that we could be united with God the Father. She knew that it was somewhat of a balancing of the scales of justice.

[5 : 48] That his strength would overwhelm the strong while strengthening the weak. That his might would pull down thrones of man and exalt the humble.

That the hungry would now be filled. That the wicked rich would be impoverished. Mary praised the Lord for his strength. Because she knew it was only by him.

Understand this Christmas. When God sent Jesus, he sent him because he knows our weaknesses. He came in weakness to reach the weak and to make them strong.

I like the way Moses said it. Well before the birth of Christ. In Exodus chapter 15 verse 2. He said the Lord is my strength and my song and he has become my salvation.

This is my God and I will praise him. My Father's God and I will exalt him. But the passages preceding the birth of Christ.

[6 : 56] Also give us reason to give him praise. We ought to give him praise this Christmas because his holiness saves us from condemnation.

Zachariah was a righteous man. A priest in the temple. And he and his wife Elizabeth had sought a child for all of their adult life.

And unable to have one they gave up. But the angel Gabriel came to them and told him that they would bear a child. And he laughed at the angel.

He didn't think it was possible and said it couldn't be. And he was instantly struck mute. It was after the baby John the Baptist was born that Zachariah regained his voice.

In response to being obedient to God in naming the child. What he was told to name the child. And immediately he began speaking.

[7 : 56] His proclamation when he began speaking again was one that praised the Lord for all that he had done. In that time of quiet. God had revealed himself to Zachariah.

And now that John the Baptist had come. Zachariah had regained his voice. It was somewhat overwhelming for him.

I want you to notice what he speaks of. He first talks about salvation. It's found in Luke 1, 68 and 69. It says this. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he has visited and redeemed his people.

And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. Now when it says a horn of salvation. A horn speaks of strength.

And if you don't understand that. Get tangled up with a bull. You don't know about a horn. After speaking of salvation. He also speaks to God's willingness to fulfill.

[8 : 57] To faithfully fulfill. That message that the prophets told throughout time. He says in verse 70. He says this. As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.

That we should be saved from our enemies. And from the hand of all who hate us. To show the mercy promised to our fathers. And to remember his holy covenant.

The oath that he swore to our father Abraham. To grant us. That we being delivered by the hand of our enemies. Might serve him without fear.

In holiness and righteousness. Before him. All of our days. In other words. It's. It was all about knowing the promise of God.

And the claiming the promise of God. What was that promise? The promise that he spoke of is. That John the Baptist would come to proclaim.

[9 : 54] As he walked before Christ. Preparing the way. And listen to how John is described. It says in verse 66. And you child will be called the prophet of the most high.

For you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways. To give knowledge of salvation to his people. In the forgiveness of their sins. Because of the tender mercy of our God. Whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high.

To give light to those who sit in darkness. And in the shadow of death. To guide our feet into the way of peace. Therefore the message. Is that a holy God loved us so much. That he sent his only son. That whoever believes in him. And turns from their wicked ways. And follows him. Will not go to hell. But will live with God. For eternity. Your relationship with God. Could begin today. And why is that? Because the holy one came.

[10:59] To save. The condemned. And for that. We ought to give him praise. But notice also. We ought to give him praise.

This Christmas. Because his peace. Settles. Our chaos. It's only by the peace of the Lord. That the chaos that goes on in our lives. Sometimes showing on our face. Sometimes just feeling in our gut. But the chaos that we deal with in our life. It's only by his peace.

That we can be settled. The angel soared over that field of sheep. Scared those shepherds to death. And said don't be afraid. How ironic is that?

I got some good news. The savior is being born. And then in Luke chapter 2 verse 14. It says glory to God in the highest.

[11:55] And on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased. You know what biblical peace is? Biblical peace is not an absence of conflict.

It's not an absence of war. It's not an absence of difficulty. Biblical peace is instead wholeness. It is completeness.

In the midst of whatever is happening. Up until now this picture had been incomplete. The story had not been written.

The ending was still to come. Up to this point any forgiveness that was given. Was simply based on what was to come.

Because that forgiveness would come. Because of what Christ would do. But once Christ came. Now the bow has been tied on the greatest gift humanity would ever be offered.

[12:58] And that's Jesus. Now it is complete. Now all is complete. Folks what I want you to hear this morning is now we can be complete.

Because of what he's done for us. He is worthy of our praise. And it ought to mark our lives.

Folks. I realize on Christmas Eve. There's a lot of things you could be doing. And a lot of busyness. With family.

And with friends. And going and doing. And you paused today. To come into this house of worship. And to take a moment to give God praise.

To remember. What this season. Is all about. And I'm glad you're here. It ought to mark our lives.

[13:59] It ought to mark our lives. We go out of this place. Change people. Because Christ has come. And if you don't know Jesus personally.

There's not a need for you to wait. Any longer. He is the greatest gift. You could ever receive. And the only gift that he asks of you.

Is to believe that he is the Christ. The son of God. And to surrender your life. To him. Because the salvation he gives. Is complete. It meets you where you are.

It solves what you need. And it is offered. Thank God to all. We ought to give him praise. This Christmas. Mary praised him. Because he touched her personally.

Zachariah praised him. What else should come from the lips. After a state of muteness. The angels praised him.

[14:59] What are we to do? We ought to praise him. We ought to praise him. With all of our lives. Let it not only mark this day. Let it mark this season.

Let it mark our worship. Let it mark our lives. He is worthy.

To be praised. With every head bowed. And every eye closed. We've looked. At the words that came.

Before the birth of Christ. That proclaimed him. Coming. I purposely. Went through. The first chapter.

Of the gospel of Luke. This year. To focus upon that. Because I wanted you to see. How poignant. The coming of Christ. Was. Through his virgin birth.

[15:59] And friend. If you're here this morning. And there's never been a time. When you've surrendered your life. To the Lord Jesus Christ. You've never asked him. To forgive you of your sins. You've never asked him.

To change your life. You've never surrendered your life. To follow him. From this day forward. I will tell you. The only hope. But it's not a wistful hope. It's a strong hope. The only hope you have. Is to give your heart and life. To the Lord Jesus today. To surrender. To him. Everything that you are. And ask him to make you. Everything he'd have you to be. If that's never happened to you today. I want you to know. In just a moment. We're going to stand. And we're going to sing. The invitation is open. I'd love to guide you. And what that means. To give your heart and life. To the Lord Jesus. Maybe you've done that privately. Maybe you've never told others about that.

[16 : 55] Or if you have. You've never done it publicly. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. By his. Example. As well as by his commission. Told us that we as Christians. Ought to be baptized. Ought to show our faith. Before others. That if we'll be ashamed of people. We'll be ashamed of him before people. He'll be ashamed of his father before us. So I'm wondering today. If there's one here. Who possibly has. Looks back at a point in your life. When you know. You've surrendered your life to Christ. But you've never been baptized. You've never followed the Lord. In that obedience step. If that's the case. I encourage you to come today. We'd love to line that up for you. Maybe God's drawing you to this church. You've been saved. You've been baptized. But God's drawing you to be a part of this church. And you want to join us in the journey. God's blessed us in recent days. We're thankful for that. We'd love for you to join us in this journey.

[17 : 58] Let's be faithful to the Lord together. Let's hold each other accountable. Let's grow in him together. Or maybe there's just stuff. You need to lay before the Lord. Maybe you need somebody to pray with you. Or you want to come to these steps. And make it your altar. Lay it down before the Lord. I don't know what you need to deal with this Christmas. But I know this is the time to do it. God's ready. Willing and able to meet you where you are. And change you forever. Lord Jesus I love you. And I thank you dear God. For the love that you have for us. I pray that you'll bless each and every person in this place today. Lord you know their needs. You know their burdens. You know what they need to do. Lead them Lord. And help us to be obedient. In Jesus name. Amen. Stand together for you.

97. Jesus is grateful for you. 8 décor Anyikuvo is with him. Cast their eyes, Beacon you love up. Oh what you are seeding? Have a love going to be for you in Jesus. surgical care. Of course goodbye. No need to be assistance. I am stepping on the ■.

[18 : 55] I thought this match basically. That will help you. Remember I will enjoy it. And I will be connecting to you in the palace. Ahhh, oh ■■■■ON interacting, church, being in hands. I taught this match. OK way.apon ■■■■■■■■, even though this match against you when it appears.