

The Magnificat

I am currently enjoying doing an online Advent Lectio Divina course. Last week the passage we focused on was the Magnificat, so this week I am giving you some thoughts from that.

It divides into 4 parts, I will give you an observation from each section.

1) Verses 46-48

And Mary said,
My soul glorifies the Lord
And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed

Here Mary is glorifying the Lord, or 'magnifying' as translated in some versions. She was aware of God's greatness and was proclaiming and drawing attention to it. If we look through a magnifying glass things are seen to be larger and more detail can be seen. This was a reminder to me to glorify God in my spirit, and to marvel at the fact that he has sent a Saviour. Also a challenge: in what ways can I magnify him to others this Christmas?

2) Verses 40-50

For the Mighty one has done great things for me-
Holy is his name.
His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

'Holy is his name'. God's "name", according to the common ancient meaning, is his whole reputation or character. Here, holy is not just an adjective describing God, it is who he is.

I meditated on the fact that God is mighty and holy, which gave me a sense of his total incorruptibility and purity and reminded me of the privilege we have in being able to communicate with one such as he is. It also inspires awe, because God is holy and I am by nature not holy: I can resist thinking too hard about his holiness because it exposes my own sin. So there is a challenge to spend time thinking /meditating on God's holiness

3) Verses 51-53

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.

Calvin says the ‘the rich ascribe all praise to themselves..we ought therefore to be scrupulously in our guard against being carried away by prosperity and against a vain satisfaction of the flesh’

I thought about physical hunger, and realised that any hunger I have known is minor compared to those in some parts of the world. And my hunger is easily sated. This can make me more likely to depend on myself than God. Spiritually, hunger its important: if I am hungry I will go looking for food and not give up until I find it.

God says he will fill those who hunger, so we need t pray that our spiritual hunger will increase. I also thought about what I desired for my children and grandchildren :is it material benefits and security, or do I hunger that they will be filled spiritually more than anything else.

4) Verses 54-55

He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants for ever,
just as he promised our ancestors

I looked up ‘remembering’ which is used in the bible to mean “remember, recall, bring to remembrance, often with an implication that a response or action of some kind will occur”

God’s remembering is not like ours (which is prone to forgetfulness) and is often tied into action. God sent Jesus as the action part of that ‘remembering’, at a time when Israel was no longer a kingdom, to teach about the kingdom of God. How amazing that God always remembers his people at the right time, even when they (or we) may consider themselves forgotten. And his mercy extends to us too (as we are grafted into Israel). I find it comforting to think of how God remembers us and is true to his promises

The Magnificat is a wonderful paeon of praise to God, who is sending a Saviour to redeem his people.

Here’s link to a sung version . [Magnificat Getty](#)

