

My Soul Proclaims with Wonder



This is Mary's song.

Mary has dared to believe the unbelievable news the messenger of God has shared with her. She would have never guessed this! But now the Lord is literally with her, growing in her womb, vulnerable, but for her care. Elizabeth's baby leapt for joy inside the womb and Mary is overcome and sings!

In the first stanza Mary is "rejoicing in God's goodness my spirit is restored." We need to rehearse and remind ourselves of the great goodness of God. It brings to mind the old song about counting your blessings. Many times we come into our sanctuaries as shipwrecked castaways from the troubles of the week. It can be easy for the trials in our lives to become so pressing and close that they block out our view of God. This is part of the blessing for those who assemble each week. We are reminded through the acts of the church that God is still bigger than our latest foe. What a soul restoring joy. The moment that Mary was with Elizabeth she experienced the fullness of that joy!

To most of the world Mary was of no account. She was born among an insignificant occupied people group. Furthermore, she was a poor peasant, without access to all the advantages money affords. Not to mention she was a woman in a time and place where she was perceived to be in all ways second-class. Yet, in the first stanza she continues, "to me God has shown favor, to one the world thought frail." Mary exults in the surprising reversal of God's strength shining in a person in whom the world would expect to find only dull weakness.

The second stanza proclaims, "The hungry find abundance, the rich, an empty cup." There is an eschatological truth here of the reversal of fortune at the end of the ages. Those whom the earth thought favored are now exposed. Those whom the earth thought pitiable are now revealed most blessed. But we must not miss the truth for the here in now. There is also another sense in which those who hunger now find their souls satisfied. Those whose cups overflow truly know the emptiness that can bring.

Carl P. Daw bookends the final measures of the hymn in the third stanza the way he began it in the first. Mary is rejoicing and her "soul proclaims with wonder the greatness of the Lord." Would that our congregations would taste this wonder this advent season.

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