

Magnify the Lord with Mary

1. For Blessing Believers
2. For Remembering His Mercy

Magnify the Lord

- Magnifying glass. Makes things look big. Print larger; science up-close, detail. With tool like this, you can magnify, make big. Can also magnify person, not by actually making them look larger, but by making big in importance, worth; speaking about with high esteem; bringing glory, praise to name for greatness. Magnify means make big; print; person, making big by highlighting greatness.
- Today's Scripture makes me think mag glass because today Mary makes God big. Magnifies Lord, highlights greatness, glorifies name. Today, song of Mary – for many years called Magnificat. Latin, means “magnify” (hear Magnificat). When Mary begins, “**My soul glorifies the Lord;**” glorifies can also be translated “magnifies.” So in this song, Mary makes God big by magnifying his greatness.
- Over centuries, this song has been magnified for its greatness. Mag sung in cathedrals, chanted in monasteries, used regularly in Christian worship for over 1000 years. In our hymnal in evening service, in hymns (like today). Beautiful song Mary sang from heart of faith. But not song or author that deserves our praise. In Mag Mary magnifies Lord. She makes him big. Let's do same. Today let's sing this song of Mary and together with Mary let's magnify the Lord.

For Blessing Believers

- Several believers in lesson. First, Eliz., **vs. 39b-40**. After Gabriel. First thing Eliz does, **vs. 42b**. Words of believer in Jesus. Eliz believed baby in Mary's womb was Son of God and world's Savior. Didn't even know what Jesus would do yet: miracles, parables, death & res. But filled with HS, believed that Mary was carrying her Lord. **Vs. 43**. Eliz believed.
- Another believer, JB. **Vs. 44**. That baby, JB, son of Z&E. Even in womb John leaped for joy being in presence of pre-born Savior. John as adult would help many others become believers; here in womb we see John believer.
- Of course, believer whose faith really shines in this lesson is Mary. Even Eliz said **vs. 45**. Mary did believe Lord's promises; trusted in Lord, even though faith challenged. Think, Mary had to: believe mother of Savior of world, long-awaited Messiah; take up task of raising Son of God; try to explain to relatives pregnant virgin in culture where pregnancies outside wedlock, incredible disgrace; so, bear shame of pregnancy from people who didn't believe virgin mother; trust that she (14?) would be taken care of, that God would protect her through pregnancy, marriage to Joseph, flight to Egypt. So many things to challenge faith.
- Through it all, Mary believed. When Gabriel announced, she, “**I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said**” (**Lk 1:38**). Mary had incredible faith! She's believer to imitated, respected by all. Not in way some Christians do: not saying sinless; should pray to; takes away sins. No; even Mary says **vs. 47**. Mary was sinner who needed Savior. But also amazing girl blessed with incredible faith and given awesome task of mothering Savior. She said **vs. 48b**. 2x by Elizabeth. Mary truly blessed by God!
- But in Mag, Mary is magnifying Lord not just for blessing her but all believers. **Vs. 50**. Mary knew her Son Jesus would be a blessing to believers of every generation: take away sins, bring peace, give eternal life; save his people. Listen how: **vs. 51b-53**. In Mag, Lord turns things upside down in favor of people. Proud he scatters; rulers he brings down; rich sends away. These are not God's people. But humble he lifts up; hungry he feeds. Earlier, **vs. 48a**. In Mag, God takes humble, lowly people, and in sense magnifies, makes them big; turns things upside down for believers – theme in Luke again and again. God raises up lowly and blesses believers. Not just Mary, but all believers, including you and me.

- This Christmas, look at your own life, see how blessed you are. Blessed with faith in Christ; with Word taught correctly in Luth church; with this cong; with another Christmas to celebrate birth; countless other blessings too many to number: some given to all God's people, some specific to you, just like God blessed Mary in specific way. So magnify Lord with Mary for blessing believers of all generations, like you and me.

For Remembering His Mercy

- **Vs. 54-55.** Important to realize: birth of Messiah event we look back on to celebrate, but event entire OT looked forward to. When you come to church Christmas Eve/Day, you know what to expect: find baby Jesus wrapped in cloth, lying in manger. But Mary and all believers before her, didn't have all details. Looking into future for birth of Messiah. Knew some things: 1st lesson, Micah 5, Bethlehem Ephrathah. Knew born of virgin, from line of David. Didn't know all details; didn't know when. So had to wait, for hundreds and hundreds of years, wondering if God had forgotten. Until finally, through Mary's Son, God **helped... (vs. 54-55).**
- If you are feeling God has forgotten about you: because won't be with family this Christmas; miss spouse died before you; hasn't taken away your sickness; don't have money to give kids the Christmas you really want; whatever – if you feel like God's forgotten about you, or perhaps stress of December has caused you to start forgetting about God, then know this: God remembers his mercy, even after a long wait. So wait with patience for Lord, be confident that just as God fulfilled his promises in the past, so he will in future. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is promise kept, and proof that God is promise-keeper. God does not forget about you, and never will, even when sickness, sadness, Satan want to convince you otherwise. God remembers mercy to Israel, just as he promised.

Make the Lord Big

- That is reason to magnify the Lord with Mary. Centuries of Christians, from every corner of earth, have magnified Lord with Mary by singing her song, the Mag. In Mag, Mary makes God big. Looks at Lord through lens of faith, sees greatness of her God. She magnifies and glorifies him, for blessing her and all believers, and for remembering his mercy to his people. Today the Mag invites us to look through same lens of faith and glorify and magnify Lord, born to be Savior in few short days. So join in the song with a joyful heart, and together with Mary magnify the Lord.

Luke 1:39-55 (NIV 2011)

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

⁴⁶And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."