

## **Sermon Draft for December 17, 2025**

### **ADVENT MIDWEEK 3**

#### **And Mary Sang**

**Text: Luke 1:46–55**

As we've seen, as we learn about Mary, we learn about Jesus. Mary has concluded her conversation with the angel Gabriel. Now she rises up and goes quickly to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who is six months along with the infant John, known as the Baptist. Do babies in the womb respond to things outside the womb? Every mom can tell you they do!

So here comes Mary, bearing the Christ Child. He is not much more than a fertilized ovum at this stage, but he is a living human being. The words of the prophet Jeremiah apply here: "***Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you***" (Jeremiah 1:5). And again, "***For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb***" (Psalm 139:13). How mysterious are these things!

When Mary approached Elizabeth, she heard Mary's greeting and "***the baby leaped in her womb***" (Luke 1:41). Elizabeth uttered an eloquent speech of praise to God, as recorded in Luke. She calls Mary "***the mother of my Lord***" (Luke 1:43). By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she perceives that the Son of God is living in her cousin's womb.

Now it's Mary's turn to speak. We turn our attention to her sacred words, the words of the Magnificat, sung by the church for over two thousand years. But the Magnificat is really about comic reversals "And Mary said" or maybe sang. "***My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. . . . He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has 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 has sent away empty'.***"

All people of all time have appreciated comic reversals. For example, let's say we have a cartoon mouse. He's being chased by a cat. The cat is about to pounce. Just then, the mouse sees the mousetrap. He flips it up into the air. The trap snaps shut on the cat's nose. "Yeeeoww!" The cheese falls out of the trap. The mouse grabs it and runs away laughing. The cats of this world love to torment the mice, don't they? It's so satisfying when the tables are turned, the cat gets his comeuppance, and the mouse gets away with it.

Dante called his epic poem the *Divine Comedy*. And properly so. The world will end like this. Just when the powers of Satan are about to destroy the church, Christ comes down from heaven with his angels and throws the devil and his angels into the lake of fire forever and ever (Revelation 20:7–10).

First, Mary exclaims how happy she is: "***My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior***" (vs 46–47). Why?

Even though she's not a princess, not the daughter of wealthy or famous parents, God has chosen her to do something special for him. "For he has looked on the humble estate of his servant" (v 48a) and she realizes that she will go down in history: "For behold, from now all generations will call me blessed" (v 48b).

Furthermore, she confesses that "**he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name**" (v 49). Here we are penetrating the heart of the matter: God is mighty. God is holy. Only one who is holy has a right to judge; only one who is mighty has the power to execute judgment upon the wicked in the series of comic reversals that follow.

Yes, God is holy, and he is merciful toward those who fear him those who recognize that he is holy and they are not. Those who repent of their sins. He forgives all sins for Christ's sake. He extends his love and blessing to children and grandchildren. So here is Mary, who to her great surprise has been lifted up from her humble estate.

Didn't she say to the angel, "***Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word***" (Luke 1:38)? This is everywhere in Scripture. "***Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you***" (1 Peter 5:6). And who exemplifies this more than Christ our Savior, who "***emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, . . . he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross***" (Philippians 2:7–8). All this for us, to take our sins upon himself and give us his holiness in exchange.

Now come these comic reversals I was telling you about. I'll give you four of them.

One: "***Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall***" (Proverbs 16:18). Mary knew her Bible well. The Bible stories are full of examples. Take Jezebel, the wicked wife of King Ahab. She browbeat her husband until he confiscated Naboth's vineyard.

But when Jehu overthrew Ahab's son, he had Jezebel thrown out the window to the street, where her body was eaten by dogs.

Two: The runaway number one bestseller in Shakespeare's day was *Concerning the Fates of Famous Men*. It contained story after story of ambitious men who managed to be lifted up rapidly by the Wheel of Fortune in terms of wealth or fame, only to be tossed off by another turn of the wheel just when they were about to triumph.

Why? Consider this. Three: Scripture says of Satan that pride was found in his heart. He was one of the greatest angels. His name was Lucifer, "bearer of light." Leader of worship of the Father and the only-begotten Son. He thinks, "I'm as holy as the Son. Why shouldn't I be worshiped as well?" Satan was cast out of heaven, taking a third of the angels with him. These became the demons that Jesus so often cast out by his almighty power. As soon as Jesus was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit, he was driven out into the wilderness, where he was tempted by Satan for forty days.

Jesus defeated the devil by the Word of God. He did this for you and me, to take away our own sins of pride, lest we end up in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels.

Fourth comic reversal: The classic example of this in the Bible is the story of King Saul and young David. The people wanted a king. So, they picked the biggest, tallest, strongest, best-looking man they could find: Saul. Trouble is, Saul was puffed up with pride. After a battle, God said, kill the king and all the noblemen. But Saul disobeyed. He thought he could fudge a little on God's command. He spared the king, Agag, whose descendant it may have been who showed up later in the book of Esther as Haman the Agagite and tried to destroy the Jews. (Esther got wind of the plot through her uncle Mordecai, and in the end, Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai.)

So, Saul was rejected as king. The prophet Samuel came to the house of Jesse to anoint a new king. In a kind of beauty contest, Jesse paraded all of his big strapping boys, seven of them.

None of them qualified. Confused, Samuel asked if there were any more sons. Yes, the youngest, David. “Bring him in,” said Samuel. God said to Samuel, “***Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart***” (1 Samuel 16:7). So, David, the lowly shepherd boy, was exalted to kingship, and he became the predecessor of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus was a king. It said so on the sign above his cross: “***The King of the Jews.***” And so, he is. If you read Romans 9 and 10 carefully, you’ll find that if you are a child of Abraham according to the flesh, it’s nothing. A true Jew is one who, like Abraham, believes in God the true God, the one who would send the Savior. It is by faith alone that we receive the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Faith accepts the promises of God. Even faith itself is a gift of God, imparted to the child in the water of Holy Baptism.

The hungry wolf is always at the door. In Mary’s time, famine was always just around the corner. Drought, crop failure, insects people lived in constant fear of starvation.

So, it's not surprising to hear Mary describing God's justice in terms of food. "***He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty***" (v 53). And what a meal God sets before us in Holy Communion! Here we have the bread of heaven, the true body of Christ, really and authentically present to forgive sins.

Now Mary sings that God has come to help. "***He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever***" (vs 54–55). The Lord has come to rescue Israel from her enemies. How has he done so? By sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and die for us. God has remembered his promises to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And to us. Listen:

***"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"*** (Jeremiah 31:34).

***"In my Father's house are many rooms. . . . I go to prepare a place for you"*** (John 14:2).

**“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”** (John 14:27).

**“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world”** (John 16:33).

**“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11:28).

**“Today you will be with me in paradise”** (Luke 23:43).

And finally this: **“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away”** (Revelation 21:3–4).

Sing it with Mary! To God be all glory. Amen