

INSPIRED WORD
November 29, 2017

Teaching: Three Canticles of Christmas – (1) Mary’s Magnificat – Luke 1:46-55

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, tonight in this place, send your Spirit upon us that we might be free to proclaim Your greatness and Your majesty as Mary did, that we might have that ignited heart, a heart filled with love for You. And that love, Lord, let us express that in song, in proclamation, in Scripture, in dance, in gesture. Glory to You, Lord.

SCRIPTURE

God is great and greatly to be praised. From **John 14:12-14**: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do because I have gone to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. We praise and glorify the holy name of God.*

PRAYER

Mary’s beautiful prayer of trust in her Creator... He was mighty. “He has done great things for me and holy is His name.” He has mercy; He’s mighty God. And we run into His arms of love. And that’s our joy. Thank You, Lord, for that, for the love that You pour forth upon us. Help us to respond this evening to that love, Lord. Glory to You; glory to You.

SCRIPTURE

The word “glory” after the first song kind of stuck with me, so from **Revelation 21:22-27**: *I saw no temple in the city; the Lord God the Almighty is the temple, He and the Lamb. The city had no need of sun or moon for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb. The nations shall walk by its light; to wit, the kings of the earth shall bring their treasures. During the day its gates shall never be shut, and there shall be no night. The treasures and the wealth of the nations shall be brought there. But nothing profane shall enter it, nor anyone who is a liar or who has done a detestable act. Only those shall enter whose names are inscribed in the book of the living, kept by the Lamb.*

EXHORTATION

And who holds the book of the living? It’s the Lord God; God who is an undying light. And that is what we turn to. As we turn to the light, the shadows fall behind us. You don’t conquer shadows by fencing them or chasing them. We overcome shadows by turning into the light and

focusing on the Lord. And they fall behind us and away. So let's continue to turn our hearts to the light and feel His love upon our faces.

PRAYER / EXHORTATION

Lord, in the busy-ness of this season, we take time for quiet. We make space for you. Advent is a time for waiting. It's a season of preparation. But preparing for what? Preparing to recognize the Christ who's already come into our lives through the gift of baptism, through the strengthening of the Spirit, and through the quiet of our prayer. Help us hear your voice, Lord.

CONFIRMATION / SHARING / IMAGE / EXHORTATION

I want to confirm your prayer, Cece. I've been reflecting on the teaching, the sharing that Barb gave us. You know, Mary said, "My soul magnifies the greatness of the Lord." And at that point, all she had heard was the word of the angel. Jesus was not born, so she wasn't aware of the greatness of her Child. So there had to be some awareness in her soul and heart of the greatness of the God, of the Child she was going to bear. But that awareness had to be present and she had to recognize that awareness. And then awhile ago Cece shared that when there's a shadow, you don't turn to the shadow to drive it away – you turn to the light. But when we're in the darkness, when we are walking in the shadow, there has to be an awareness in our heart that there is a light, that the darkness is not everything. We have to be aware and hopeful that that light will indeed bring us out of that darkness. But again, as with Mary, that awareness has to be there. And I was reflecting... If there's a hope in our hearts that there is something greater than the darkness, that there's something in our heart that says, "My soul, my soul, will magnify the greatness of my Lord and my God", then I have to have an awareness in my heart of how great God is. Because if I don't have that great awareness in my own heart, I can't tell evil that God is really that great. And if I do say that without that awareness, it's gonna probably be hollow words. And so as we hear these lessons and then the sharings that Cece has prayed, we have to be, in our hearts, silent enough to hear the word of God in our hearts to recognize what He's doing in our hearts, to recognize how great He is, so that we can go out and proclaim the same words. We can go out and say, "You know, there is a greatness, there is a light, there is something there that I hope for that I can't exactly describe. But I know that it's great enough that it brings joy to my heart, and I would like to share that joy with you." As we were praying before the meeting, this image came and the image was like this. You know, when you start a fire, you usually start a fire, a wood fire, with real, real tender kindling and that kindling catches fire first, and then you use it to start the larger fire, to start the larger logs, the larger wood. And the sense that came to me is that we are to be that kindling. We are to be that kindling that burns first so that we can ignite the fire in the larger logs, so we can carry that fire out to others. But we can't carry that fire out to others if we don't carry the awareness in our own hearts first. And so we are to reflect on that. You know, how in my life can I become more aware of what God's doing and therefore proclaim that greatness to others?

SCRIPTURE

From the first chapter of the book of **Jeremiah 1:5-6**: *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.”* Or I am too old. Or I don’t know enough. Or I am too afraid. Or I just don’t know how. **1:7**: *But the Lord God said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth.’”* Or too old. Or too afraid. Or don’t know enough. **1:7-10**: *“...for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.” Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth... to build and to plant.”*

CONFIRMATION / IMAGE / SCRIPTURE

I have to follow up what Denise said when she read “the Lord put forth his hand.” Earlier tonight after Barb gave her talk on the Magnificat, I got this vision of the Lord’s hand coming down to us. And the first thing that we do is give our burdens to Him, and there was His hand. And we put all of our burdens into His hand and He took them away. Earlier today I was reading **Psalms 145**, just to praise the Lord, and the hands are there again. Starting in verse **13-16**: *The Lord is trustworthy in all his words and loving in all his works. The Lord supports all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes all look hopefully to you. You give them their food in due season. You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.* In verse 14, the Lord supports all who are falling. How many times have we fallen and the Lord picked us up? He raises up all who are bowed down. I can just imagine Him putting His hand under us and picking us up. And then in verse 16, He opens wide His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing.

SENSE

The scripture says that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, isn’t there? And I just sense we are immersed in the love of the Lord, that some of us are experiencing that freedom right now. Freedom in areas of our life, perhaps, that we felt down, or we felt hopeless; we felt despair; we felt fear. But no, no! The Spirit of the Lord brings freedom. Freedom from all of those things because He pours into our hearts the very love of the triune God. The Spirit of the Lord brings freedom, brings freedom now, brings freedom this night, brings freedom in this place.

PRAYER

Mary teaches us so many things but one thing she teaches us is that freedom from something is freedom for something. She was freed from sin so that she could be free to say yes. Lord, we just ask for that same freedom, the freedom to say yes.

EXHORTATION

I challenge you tonight that what you've laid down, don't pick it back up on your way out. The Lord on the cross and in the tabernacle and in our hearts has got full control, and He will heal the space where there once was something that you've had to lay down. He'll fill that space with joy.

SHARING / SENSE / EXHORTATION / PRAYER

What a challenging night the Lord has given us. All the beautiful words that He placed in our hearts and minds to praise Him with, that we don't run into the darkness, that we run into the light, that we can be the kindling for a huge fire. And one thing He reminded me of... I love this saying and I've said it many times over the years that all the darkness in the universe can't hide the light of a single candle. And I think the Lord is telling us tonight, He's telling us that we're overshadowed with His love, with His compassion, with His kindness. And being overshadowed with that love, even if we find it hard to be part of the larger log that catches on fire, we can still be the light of a single candle. And if we do that, each one of us as a single candle, and we come together, we can become a bright light. And if we become that bright light, then we can take the same love, the same mercy, the same healing that we heard about tonight, and we can carry it out there and be light to someone else. I think that's what the Lord is saying. When Mary heard the Lord's message, she sang, she praised, she was joyful and she gave thanks to the Lord. And very simply stated, that's what I think the Lord is calling each one of us to do, just to go out and sing His name and to praise Him and to thank Him, and be joyful and be the light of that fire or be the light of that candle and run to the light with each person we know needs it. And we thank You for that, Lord, and we praise You. Amen.