

# 8.12.24 pm Good News For Mary

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Date: 08 December 2024

Preacher: Scott Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] A warm welcome, good evening to everyone. It's good to see us all here this evening. Welcome to those online, welcome to anyone that's visiting with us.

We pray that as we join together in worship we would know God's blessing together as we draw near to him. We'll begin by worshipping God by singing in Gaelic first of all, singing from Psalm 18 and verse 49 and verse 50.

I'll read the words in English first. Therefore to thee will I give thanks, the heathen folk among, and to thy name, O Lord, I will sing praises in a song.

He great deliverance gives his king. He mercy doth extend to David his anointed one and his seed without end.

A psalm there that calls us to praise God, having sent his anointed one through the line of David. So we remain seated for the singing in Gaelic.

[ 1 : 21 ] Therefore to thee will I give thanks. NINGNINGNINGNING!

. Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us?

Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us?

Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us?

Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us?

[ 3 : 23 ] Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us? Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us?

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I keep forgetting to announce the Gaelic prayer we'll be following. And tonight, Callum's going to lead us in the Gaelic prayer. Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us?

[ 4 : 51 ] Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us? Oh, Lord, will you first or then answer for us?

Well, will you first or then answer for us? Well, will you first or then answer for us? Well, will you first or then answer for us? Well, will you first or then answer for us? Well, will you first or then answer for us? Well, will you first or then answer for us?

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And behold, your relative Elizabeth, in her old age, has also conceived a son. And this is the sixth month with her, who is called barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, Behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

[14:05] And the angel departed from her. In these days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah. And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women. And blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from her Lord. And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord.

And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. For he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

[15:18] For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed. For he who is mighty has done great things for me.

And holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him. From generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm.

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. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy.

As he spoke to her father, to Abraham and to his offspring forever. And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

[16:25] Amen. May the reading of God's word be a blessing to all who have heard it. We'll continue in praise by singing in Psalm number 89.

Psalm number 89 from the beginning of that psalm. Singing down to the end of verse Mark 6.

God's mercies I will ever sing. And with my mouth I shall thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all. For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure.

Thy faithfulness even in the heavens thou wilt establish sure. I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously. And to my servant whom I loved, to David sworn have I.

That I thy seed established shall forever to remain. And will to generations all thy throne build and maintain. We'll sing from the beginning of this psalm down to the end of verse Mark 6.

[17:37] To God's praise and we'll stand to sing. God's mercies I will ever sing. God's mercies I will ever sing.

And with my mouth I shall. NINGNINGNINGNINGNING Mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure.

Thy faithfulness in the hands, the will to accomplish sure.

I with my chosen one have made a crown and graciously.

And to my servant, who my lot, to David sworn have I.

[19:12] That I, I see, establish a forever to remain.

And will to generations of thy throne build and maintain.

The praises of thy wonders, Lord, the heavens shall express.

And in the congregation of saints thy faithfulness.

For who in heaven with the Lord may once himself compare?

[20:21] Who is like God among the sons of those that mighty are?

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. but before we turn to this passage let us join together in prayer let us pray our father in heaven we ask that you would guide us as we turn to your word that your spirit would help us and instruct us and illuminate the great truth of your word to us that we may come to it as a word that speaks to our hearts like nothing else in this world speaks to us so lord may we praise you for it may we sing your mercies forever may we give thanks to you for all that you have done for us and continue to do even in this moment we praise and thank you that you are a god that looks upon us you are a god that may be working things by the power of your hand in ways that we cannot

comprehend even in this hour so we thank you that you are a god who is over all things in all authority you are a god who is mindful of each of us a god that listens to the prayers and anguish cries that come up and the groans that we cannot express from the depths of our hearts you hear us you do not turn our prayer away nor do you turn your love or your grace from us and so we come in confidence to you and your word knowing that they are sure promises for us to lay hold of this evening we thank you for the coming of jesus christ we thank you for the savior that we have that he loved us and displayed that love in such a way that he would go to the cross and give us life for us and he told his disciples before he left he told the one that had lost a loved one in lazarus he spoke to another mary by saying that even though you may die yet the one who trusts in me shall live what a hope the christian has what a hope the believer has in trusting in that word for themselves that we can receive it with joy help us to receive it that we may fall before you our lord and creator as our savior may it be tonight that we part from this place rejoicing knowing that each of us can say i have a savior in jesus christ he is my savior it was impossible for me to save myself but god has made it possible through the blood of jesus christ that i can be washed clean of my sin that i can enter into the presence of god and dwell with him what a savior we have so let our time together be a time of worship praise and adoration of our savior that speak to us we pray the truthful clarity of your character your justice and your wrath

and though at times it may bring sadness to us hearing this message we pray that it would drive us to jesus christ more and more seeing the sinfulness in our hearts that we would come that we would come to the cross that we would come to his word that we would fall on our knees and give our lives humbly to him so be with us in all things we ask may your spirit hover over us we pray and those even who are not with us who wish to be with us those who do not desire to be with us we pray your spirit be at work amongst us in jesus name amen turning back to this passage for nothing will be impossible with god the good news to mary this morning we looked with david at the good news to jacob and we saw the good news that came to joseph good news but it didn't initially seem like good news to him tonight we're going to continue that theme by looking at the good news to mary and as we do that i want to look at the announcement that comes to her that good news message but i also want to consider how she responds to that message the praise that she gives in that song they are like the magnificat here in this passage is the beginning of god starting to set things in motion his hand is coming down to do work he is setting the stage for him to make his greatest revelation the moment that he would bring the messiah king into this world the moment god would show his strength like he never had before and in a way that many did not expect him to show that strength and in that day the jews of course had been had been waiting for a messiah king to come someone who would save them a leader a king that would come to bring them into this place of peace and promise of this great land that would be fruitful the promise that had been made to abraham to jacob promise that had been made to david many of the prophets spoke about this messiah king that would come a great king to rule them a great shepherd to lead them like no one had ever led them or guided them or ruled them this mighty king is going to come and crush your enemy the jews they waited they waited they waited when was he going to come and we all know what it's like to wait for something and i'm sure there are many boys and girls maybe some older ones here who are waiting for something to happen this month we're waiting for maybe some christmas presents on christmas morning maybe thinking about the things the gifts that we may receive and we know if all being well that it will come we know we have a date the 25th of december this christmas morning for us but i want you to imagine if you didn't know the date if you knew that there was a christmas morning and if you knew that you were going to receive lots of nice [ 29 : 04 ] gifts and spend time with one another but you didn't know when it was going to be you'd be waiting for this day you'd be waiting for this morning and you'd be waiting and waiting and eagerly waiting when was it going to come and that's kind of what's happened in our passage here the jewish people are waiting for christmas morning they're waiting for the king the messiah king to come that's the first christmas the first christmas we have in the passage where jesus was born the first action the action that would come from this announcement jesus would be born they didn't know when he was coming up until this moment that we've read about in the passage up until this great announcement it's almost as if god is now setting a date for them he's saying the king is coming the messiah you've been waiting for the greatest gift that anyone could ever receive in this world is about to be given to the people so as we look at this great news good news message that comes we firstly have it in the announcement that is made by the angel gabriel showing this young girl mary how christmas would come in this miraculous birth of jesus this is a hand of god being

working behind the scenes it is god's might coming down orchestrating things for his glory it is strength of god being revealed and then we see mary's response to that hand of god coming down in the song of praise that she writes a song that lifts up the name of her god and a song that lifts up praise to the heavens so in this passage we have strength come down in the hand of god and we have praise gone up from the response of mary so firstly i want us to look at the strength come down in the announcement of the angel gabriel that hand of god comes down with great power to bring jesus into the world in such a way that this king would not be tainted by sin and yet this great strength of god comes in such a weak appearance it's what behind the scenes this strength that ultimately would come in the form of this helpless child who would be reliant upon this young mary mother commentator say was likely a teenager at this time a mother who was nobody to anyone else particularly important the hand of god the strength of his might completely disguised in complete weakness and the angel appears to mary in this chapter the arm of god begins to move before in this chapter you can read about the foretold birth of john the baptist to zechariah again that was the angel gabriel that came

and made that announcement and then the angel gabriel makes the second announcement here to mary and as the angel appeared she was filled with fear she was greatly troubled when the angel appeared and it is a great fear when you look at the greek the word that describes this fear is not used anywhere else in scripture it is a fear like no other fear it was truly a reflection of the glorious presence of god that comes through this angel gabriel's duty was to herald the messiah is coming the king will come it is good news to all people and the announcement that she makes is there recorded for us from verse 30 do not be afraid she says to mary first mary was full of fear as we have said and the angel addresses that fear the angel calms her and says there's nothing wrong in sense you have found favour with god and behold he calms her down you have found favour with god but listen he says the angel says behold because there is something important that you must hear you will be honoured with a child it will be a boy and you will call him jesus the hebrew for that name is joshua which means the lord saves and as the angel announces this message to mary we're getting a greater picture of what the angel is saying to her says first of all that he will be great then it says that he will be called son of the most high in verse 32 notice the capital letter shown most high because that most high is a reference to god of who is the greatest of who there is no one higher he is the highest of all you'll notice that that phrase most high is repeated in verse 35 also and when you follow through and reading there the most high he will overshadow you the child will be born will be holy the son of god that message of the most high is clearly a reference to god and it is emphasized there and what is later said and clarified it is the son of god gabriel goes on to continue by saying that this boy jesus will have a throne implying that he will be a king a king of the line of david of his father david of who himself had david had the promise that from his line that great king would come in first samuel second samuel chapter seven the king messiah is coming through mary you

imagine it this young teenage girl bearing the son of god the heavenly king the one that the nation had been waiting for the inexperienced mother becoming responsible for the saviour of the world the son of god if you were to hand over something precious to someone else something that you couldn't face to lose maybe your wallet maybe your phone maybe some precious item that you could not put a value on that had been passed down through your family you'd want it to be someone trustworthy you'd want to be if it was a child you were leaving with someone else or in this case even a baby you'd want to leave him or her in safe and capable hands someone that you would be confident of their capabilities this is all understandable but it's hardly a dent really to the reality of what's going on here in this passage this is

God's only son in the hands of a teenager I'm not saying that Mary wasn't trustworthy but what I'm saying is that she was a sinful human she was sinful as all of us are sinful she was sinful as all of Israel were unfaithful to God in times past she was born in sin herself she was inexperienced as a mother she was young and young teenagers aren't renowned for their responsible duties for the mighty God to act in such a way it's quite staggering really that he would give his son his only son to this young girl but still the surpassing strength and power of God is in behind all of this working and orchestrating things for his glory it is the strength of God clothed in complete weakness weakness to the

Jewish people as a young girl poor mother and a female the Jews would not have regarded her in any special way at all they would have probably have despised her for who she was and she would

have been the least expected person through whom God would bring the king it doesn't seem like that's what's bothering her though she couldn't just grasp how this is going to happen in verse 34 what she asks Gabriel is how will this be since I am a virgin how is this possible so in this announcement Gabriel brings further understanding here from verse 35 onwards tells her that the Holy

[ 40 : 45 ] Spirit will come upon you commentators will often when you read of these passages make note of the repetition of the Holy Spirit in chapter 1 and chapter 2 spirit of God is now at work in a way that is special God is orchestrating things and it says that this spirit will come upon you the spirit would enable her to bear this child this responsibility the power of the most high will overshadow you we wish be the commentator says that this overshadowing would be like the cloud of the tabernacle that overshadowed that dwelling place of God that overshadowed the holy presence of his being where

God would dwell it was a guiding cloud a protecting cloud it was a presence of God and she is told that this God will overshadow you and cover you with his presence he will protect you and guide you because like the temple was holy the one within her would be called holy says there and then the line that confirms it all he will be the son of God the son of God will be your child how is this possible God within her the angel says verse 37 for nothing will be impossible with God and you think about this passage and you think well what great news what good news this is to the world they've all been waiting for the saviour and the saviour is coming the messiah king is going to come the date has been given great news good news but as we thought of with Joseph in the morning it wasn't that good news initially for them Mary being betrothed to Joseph and becoming pregnant would have been a thing of shame for her Joseph as we read of in the morning looked in a way in which he would divorce her and if this was the case and if she had been divorced she would have been considered a widow for the rest of her life more than likely probably remaining unmarried so really this woman this teenage girl stood to lose her future at this moment if she was to have a child she would have expected to have lose the one in whom she was betrothed to was it good news for her in that moment it wasn't the best of news socially it was great news for her spiritually and the nation spiritually but for her carried a great weight she was prepared she was prepared in accepting this to be despised amongst her peers probably thought of as a liar probably someone that was immoral a woman of lowest regard she gave up her future to follow God could you do that could you give up your future to follow God if he asked you to do something for him if he asked you to change your life to follow him and his word if he asked you to go to a foreign land and share the gospel message if he asked you to become a preacher of the gospel would you be prepared to follow that announcement in your life to give up on your hopes all the personal ambitions that you had to give up on the bucket list that you had created for your life to be someone that others wouldn't take regard of and despise you because of who you listen to it makes no sense doesn't it it made no sense for her moment but she trusted in the word of God that was the most important thing that she did nothing compared to knowing that she could trust in God knowing that God would be with her knowing that God would overshadow her could you trust him tonight if he asked you to do something for him did Mary understand what the future looked like no but she trusted in the words of a God who could do the impossible for her was she an experienced mother as we said no she wasn't was she a lady that could offer financial security to this child no was she the greatest figure in the Jewish community around her no did she have a certain future and a plan prepared for this child no she didn't even know if she would be married but willing to give it all up willing to be despised amongst those she lived with to serve

[ 47 : 19 ] God and follow him it does not matter what my circumstances will be as long as I'm following God's word does not matter what the future awaits as long as I'm in the hand of God as long as the Lord is overshadowing my life the circumstances of my life are but a shadow in comparison to what the Lord will do for me we do not hear her say I cannot do it we do not hear her say I cannot bear this I am not able what do we hear her say verse 38 in response to all this Mary's reply is behold I am the servant of the Lord let it be to me according to your word the strength of God coming down in this moment clothed in the weakness of this teenage mother but she trusted in the

Lord she trusted in this God that would do the impossible for her she gave her life to be a servant to the Lord to follow his word and as we see in this passage she lifted her voice in praise to God in a magnificent way in her song that goes up to heaven that's her second point the strength of the hand

of God has come down starting to work things together for his glory and bringing the son Jesus into the world the saviour but Mary reacts to this message in this song of praise this song is her response to all that God has done for her in this moment this is her reaction to the actions of God in her life she receives good news from

Gabriel and follows to meet with Elizabeth in a passage here which surely was a confirmation to her that the word of God is true and faithful and she finds out that Elizabeth has a child within her that leapt with her and verse 45 says and blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord she trusted in the spoken words of the Lord said to her through the angel seeing the hand of God at work in Elizabeth's life in her own life she cannot but come to God and praise to sing a song and the Christian should know this in measure that they see God's hand at work in their lives that they see God's hand saving them that they see God directing them and keeping them from trouble and danger guiding them through the valley of the shadow of death knowing God's hand at work in our lives it produces praise in us from the depths of our hearts we lift our voices to God in praise knowing his overshadowing presence personally instills within us praise the song that Mary writes from verse 46 onwards it's hugely scriptural the commentator plumber notes that there is over 12 Old Testament references in this song a lot of which has come from the

Psalms many comedians will also compare this song that is written to Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel they both begin by exalting the Lord exalting God magnifying his name it is all about God it is all about her Lord as we read through it did you notice what she said she said he has seven times he has seven times she says this through this song it is all about him it is all about he who has done so much for me and I praise him for it it is all about her saviour but the ironic thing is and sadly that many strands of the church do not see this and they give praise to the one who wrote this song when she was diverting all the praise to the glory of

[ 53 : 06 ] God she has mistakenly been treated as someone that they have come to praise she wanted the praise to be God's and God's alone and she firstly says in this song my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices!

in God my saviour because she too needed a saviour and only sinners need saviours so it was clear that she was not without sin she acknowledges herself in verse 48 as a humble servant of the Lord this word humble expresses the lowliness of her condition as a woman with nothing to bring but even so as someone so low the Lord had his eye on her he looked upon this woman and he has greatly blessed her greatly blessed her and it is a blessing that should be remembered from now on all generations would speak about the blessing that she received from

God all from God and she receives this honour humbly! to herself she receives this blessing and accepts it she does not boast that she is the one that is chosen she does not say I am worthy of this honour she does not say I am not able to bear it neither she is humble about it if she was full of pride she would be boasting about receiving God's gift she would be taking credit for what God has done but I read something that pride is refusing God's gift receive it to we often think that pride would be taking credit for what God has done in our lives that we would dismiss God and take all pride to ourselves but it is also pride is refusing

God's gift isn't it if we are too proud to refuse! God's gift to us if God's offering us something tonight we're too proud to receive it Mary has not been proud she humbly receives this great blessing from God what God has done for her in this moment a gift that she receives with great joy it is the mighty hand of God at work in her life to whom and to whom alone be all the praise I magnify my Lord for all that he has done for me and is this not the saved Christians song as well the believers song that the Lord has greatly blessed you and saving you that through Jesus Christ we have received the greatest gift of all and we must receive it humbly

We receive salvation through the good news of Jesus Christ as our saviour we may see your condition as poor and lowly we may think that we have nothing to bring to God to offer to him but when he comes and blesses us we say look at what he has done for me look at my saviour look at my God look at what he did on the cross for me for me can you say that tonight what Jesus Christ has done for you is he your saviour can you say my saviour do you lift your voice and praise to the Lord and magnify the name of Jesus Christ he has done the impossible for me he has saved me from sin he has washed my soul clean that

[ 57 : 59 ] I may appear before God in his righteousness she lifts her voice in praise but she acknowledges the power of God also from verse 50 down to verse 53 his mercy this is for those

who fear him from generation to generation as if that mercy is passed on from generation and continues it is steadfast it has no limits does not cease he has shown strength was his arm by scattering the proud and the thoughts of their hearts he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humbly state an arm that has defied all proud people those that are arrogant those who do not think that they need God she has the confidence in the strength of

God's arm and power that strength that is now acting in her life and in her time she has complete confidence in her Lord that will knock other kings off their thrones and put King Jesus in their place a king that will reach down to the lowly one that will reach down to her life that will reach down to the poor the depressed the downcast of hearts he will be a king that will reach down to each and every one of us here in whatever situation we are in tonight and lift us up and exalt those of humble estate and not only will he lift them up he will provide for them he has filled the hungry with good things but the rich he has sent away empty those who trust in whom he will fill but those who have their own riches those who have their own things that they can trust upon they do not fully trust in the

Lord he will send them away empty they will have nothing they will leave empty handed if they do not trust in the Lord as their saviour what a great saviour the Christian has what a great change he can make in our lives that he can reach down and take us from a low estate in our sin and lift us up to be exalted in the righteousness of Jesus Christ he has great compassion on those who need him those who are longing for him those who are hungry for him he will feed them he will reach down to them in his great compassion and lift them up from the riches of his grace he will keep and provide for his people who trustingly rely on him every day he has the power to do the impossible but also in closing her song touches on a promise her song recalls the promise that was made to the servant of

Israel to Jacob that he would bring a nation a people God has remembered Israel here in verse 54 and 55 he has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy and he spoke to her fathers to Abraham and to his offspring forever she recalls the great promises that had been made in scripture historically years ago that she had been taught probably from her youth that she knew about the promises!

made in scripture and here she sees that God has not forgotten! us! there had been a great silence from the last prophet till this moment 400 years between the testaments expectations of maybe this king had been running dry but now the promise is sure in her heart God has not forgotten his people God has not forgotten the nation of Israel now is the time where the king will come and he will bless them and she lays hold of that promise that was made to Abraham as her promise now is the time that great blessing will come we will have a king we will be a people we will be a nation we will have peace his presence will be with us she lays hold of the promise she recalls the promises in scripture she magnifies the

[ 63 : 30 ] Lord as a faithful keeping God to her and her people the Lord is like no one else to her in this passage! strength of God's hands at work in her life and she praises God in such a wonderful way good news to her soul good news to the world she magnifies her own personal saviour the Lord Jesus Christ who is the saviour of this world is he your saviour this evening do you know his overshadowing presence in your life do you know the mighty strength of his hand at work in saving you and guiding you and keeping you does your soul praise him when you see him at work in your life you cannot but sing about the

Lord for the great blessing that he has given to you maybe there's someone listening to this and saying impossible impossible impossible impossible God will not do this for me nothing will be impossible with God I've had people say to me that God will never save me God will never have me nothing is impossible with God if you trust him in his word tonight we have seen an example of a woman who trusted God trusted the word of the Lord even though it meant her life would be turned upside down she thought it would it was in many ways maybe not as she expected but the Lord worked things out wonderfully for her yes she had great difficulties but she had great blessings too in her life that's all the Christian who follows Jesus every day yes there will be difficulties but there will be great blessings and with the greatest blessing of all receiving the righteousness of Jesus Christ her future she did not know what it meant to live having this child but she trusted in his word good news to Mary God's beginning to act all this strength shrouded in complete weakness this teenage girl rejected by everyone around her probably but she magnifies the Lord in a wonderful way and so let us magnify the Lord who came to die on the cross for us who loved us to

die to come from heaven to be brought into this world to be spat upon to be mocked as a king to be ridiculed to die but yet he would rise again and so let us give praise to God this evening that death shall not conquer sting of death shall not hurt us like it does we shall not feel the pain of sting of death because if we trust in him we have life and life eternal is this good news to your soul this evening does it produce a reaction in your heart that wants to praise him and thank him for all that he has done for you that your life is no longer about me it's all about what the Lord has done I trust in him I trust my life to him and in him I will not die but I will live is that not good news for each and every one of us tonight let us trust in the great gift of Jesus Christ and his word that will save those who trust in him may these thoughts be blessed to us we conclude by singing in hymn number 180 hymn number 180 child in the manger infant of Mary outcast and stranger lord of all child who inherits all our transgressions all our demerits on him fall we'll stand and sing this hymn together child in an infant of me outcast and stranger lord of all child in heaven for transgressions all our demerits strong and fall what's the most holy child of salvation chanted and glory let be low now us and glorious mighty redeemed and see in victorious for his home prophets for to him! closing prayer our lord and our god as we part may we lift our heart to you in praise and thankfulness for all that you have done for us that we may rejoice in you that we may find our joy in you that we may live lives that give you all the praise and the glory be with us we pray!  
[ 71 : 49 ] as we part may we know your presence overshadowing us in our lives we ask these things in Jesus name Amen