

Unpacking the Preach

Date: 11th December 2022
Sermon Title: Mary's Song
Bible Passage: Luke 1: 39 - 56

Introduction

Take time to read the passage from a couple of different translations.

- Highlight the key verses, repeated phrases or words from this passage. What do you think is the significance of these words?
- Who are the main characters in the story?
- Why do you think Luke included this story of a meeting between two women? How would it help Theophilus be certain of the things he has been taught (Luke 1:3-4)?

Recapping the Preach

Stu mentioned that some commentaries point to the revolutionary nature of Mary's Song.

- What would you say is the main point or theme of Mary's Song?

Stu went on to say that the main theme that stood out from the passage is mercy (vs.50,54). Mary recognised God's mercy in that she knew Him as Saviour, Mighty, Holy Lord of all who had chosen to be mindful of the humble state of His servant.

- Scholars point to the similarity between Mary's Song and Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. What are the similarities between Mary and Hannah and their song/prayer?
- List all the things that Mary's song says about the Lord?
- Why do you think Mary sings in the past tense in vs.51-55? What is the significance of this?

Stu said of mercy: Mercy which some describe as not getting what we deserve while grace is getting what we do deserve. It is God's goodness to us in our misery and distress. It fuels compassion, it provides hope filled shafts of light in an often dark world. It is kindness expressed in action, forward forgiveness and empathy. It is the quality that chooses not to be offended or keep a record of wrongs but rather strives to see the hurt behind others hurtful words. Mercy and grace - in short it is God's movement towards Mary.

- Does anything stand out to you in this description?
- Is there any part of it that is particularly challenging?
- How does this description of 'mercy' fit with God's closing of Mary?

Stu then made connections between mercy and grace seen in Mary's Song with Christmas, the life and ministry of Jesus and the gospel.

- Read the following stories: Mark 2:13-17; Luke 23:39-43; John 8:2-11. In what ways do you see mercy and grace at work in these stories? What do you think the response is of each person?

Stu closed by reminding us that as recipients of mercy and grace we are to be merciful and gracious towards others.

- Why do we find this hard to do?

Response

- Is there anything from the preach and passage that you will be taking away to reflect on or work on?
- Who do you need to extend mercy and grace to?

Prayer pointers

- Take time to share prayer requests and pray for one another.
- Pray that the Lord would open up opportunities for you to share your faith.
- Pray that all your words and actions will be seasoned with mercy and grace this Christmas.

Additional resources:

If you need some additional resources the below websites are useful:

- <https://www.gotquestions.org>
- <https://bibleproject.com> (videos)
- <https://enduringword.com>
- <https://www.biblica.com>
- <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/>