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46 And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord,

47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

48 "For He has had regard for the humble state of His slave;

For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

49 "For the Mighty One has done great things for me;

And holy is His name.

50 "AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION

TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

51 "He has done mighty deeds with His arm;

He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.

52 "He has brought down rulers from their thrones,

And has exalted those who were humble.

53 "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS;

And sent away the rich empty-handed.

54 "He has given help to Israel His servant,

In remembrance of His mercy,

55 As He spoke to our fathers,

To Abraham and his descendants forever."

56 And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home.

This morning we will broach a subject that is wildly important and perhaps also, wildly neglected. That topic is obvious in the passage that we just read. It goes to the very core of the reason for our creation. It is what we were designed by God to do, and also I might add, it is the most supreme joy of our very conscious being, when we experience the fulness of it.

What am I describing? Worship. Worship.

Let me read to you words that I found this week that bring a unique focus on this topic of worship. I am quoting Tim Challies blog from October 10th 2018.

["Eighteen hours ago, brothers and sisters in New Zealand gathered to worship God. City by city and church by church they joined their voices together to praise him in song, to call out to him in prayer, and to hear from him through the Word. So, too, did believers in the easternmost reaches of Russia. As their worship services drew near to a close, Australians in Sydney, then Adelaide, then Perth began to sing their own calls to worship, as did Christians in Japan and Korea. Next, millions of Chinese believers added their voices, as did Filipinos and Indonesians. By now nearly a quarter of the earth was resounding with the sound of Christian worship.

Soon Christians in central Russia began to worship together as did believers in Singapore, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Friends in Kolkata, New Delhi, Mumbai and a host of other cities, towns, and villages in India began to sing their praises to God. Then joining the chorus were brothers and sisters from Western Asia. Already “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” had gathered in fellowship to bring their offerings of praise.

Now Eastern Europe and Eastern Africa began to stir—Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, Ukraine, Greece, and Romania. Songs were sung in countless languages and hands were lifted in tiny villages and great cities. The sun continued its journey so continental Europe awoke along with Scandinavia and central Africa. Then Christians in England and Scotland and Iceland and Portugal and Ghana and Nigeria began to worship the one true God in a host of different tongues and expressions.

Just as their songs began to wane, worship broke out in the Americas—first Brazil, then Venezuela, then at “mile 1” of North America, the city of St. John’s on the East Coast of Canada. A thousand songs, ten thousand songs, broke out all at once.

Now finally, finally, at 10:01 AM Eastern Standard Time, I rise from my little plastic chair in a little gym in a little school in Toronto, and I add my little voice to the great chorus.

And as I stand to sing this call to worship, I know that before I have received the benediction, believers in Dallas will have begun to sing, and after them friends in Alberta, then California and Alaska. Last of all, the sun’s rays will break the darkness over Hawaii and, they, too will worship. And then, as they sing their doxology, they will sing it for themselves and for me and for every Christian from east to west, from pole to pole.

For one day—one day out of the week—the whole earth will have joined to give God the honor due his name.”]

As long as I am plagiarising other peoples words who can say things much better than I can, listen again to the words of a hymn that first appeared almost 300 years ago; It expresses beautifully the idea of global worship that Mr. Challies above wrote down so

well.

Isaac Watts was doing the same thing I am this morning, and borrowing words and ideas from Psalm 72 when he wrote this hymn.

I'm going to include 2 stanzas that you won't find in your hymnals. They were included in parenthesis in the 1719 hymnals as optional stanzas that could also be sung.

And by the way, as you listen carefully to his words, I would also appeal to you that the reason we sing so many old hymns is because of the depth of the worship they exhibit, something I fear our generation is losing. See if you might agree, and if not agree, at least understand.

["Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun"
by Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

"1. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

2. For Him shall endless prayer be made,
And endless praises crown His head;
His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise
With ev'ry morning sacrifice.

3. People and realms of ev'ry tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

4. Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The pris'ner leaps, unloosed his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.

5. Where He displays His healing power,
Death and the curse are known no more;
In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.

(Behold the Islands with their Kings,
And Europe her best Tribute brings;
From North to South the Princes meet
To pay their Homage at his Feet.

There Persia glorious to behold,
There India shines in Eastern Gold;
And barbarous Nations at this Word
Submit and bow and own their Lord.)

6. Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honors to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen."

The old hymn writers understood that we aren't singing little ditties that are designed to make us feel good.

We are pouring out our hearts in worship of Him who will soon return and crush Satan and all evil and who will reign forever over the earth whose inhabitants will forever praise and worship Him.

So, then, with that introduction of lofty worship, let's look at one of the most beautiful and spontaneous paeens of worship in all of the

Bible.

First of all, we need to understand the setting. Though Luke is a new testament writer, he begins his discourse solidly in the old testament environment of Israel.

Many people see John the baptist as the final old testament figure. The new was dawning, indeed, John would be the herald of that dawn, but we are in Old Testament Israel this morning with Mary and Elizabeth.

39 Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

At what time? Immediately after Gabriels visit to bring God's message to her. That time.

Although we will note that the news given to Mary by the angel Gabriel seems to have preceeded her visit. Else, Elizabeth would not have been able to greet her with the greeting we will soon read.

Many scholars guess Mary's age to be very very young. Perhaps as young as 13 years old.

We know from historic records and accounts that girls could be betrothed already at that age to their future husbands. So, it's speculation, but we have history written that places child bearing age much younger than our social norms.

We marvel at how a woman of that age covers 100 plus miles then to visit her relative, Elizabeth. At least a four day journey. Did she do that alone, or?? It would be quite a journey no matter what their norms were.

So what happens when a young woman receives an angelic visit, is filled with the Holy Spirit, is bursting with worship and there just is no outlet for the joy and exuberance she has experienced. No one would believe her.

Walking 100+ miles to be with the one other female who will understand, is like nothing. And it's presented just that way; *Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.*

Recall that Gabriel's proof that the message he has delivered is indeed to be believed is this miracle that has already happened to Elizabeth. She who was formerly barren and is advanced in years, is miraculously pregnant. Gabriels proof to Mary that this is all real!

There's one person on earth who will believe Mary, to be a pregnant virgin is too spectacular for anyone else to believe, and that person is also the person who's miraculous pregnancy is the proof positive that God will perform what He says He will do.

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

And just here we are introduced to the common denominator of all acceptable worship. Meaningful worship. *Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Adams race, in it's fallen condition, has no capacity for real, acceptable, pleasing worship of God. True worship is always, always a collaboration of God's Holy Spirit filling us and working out His worship, through us.

The lady at the well; John 4:20 *“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”*

And what does Jesus say? 23*“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.*

The place doesn't matter. True worship happens by means of the Spirit. And equally important; the truth.

Whenever the Holy Spirit combines with us in worship, the truth, the Word of God will be honored.

Jesus makes a distinction between what this lady calls worship and what He calls true worship.

There is a worship that God hates and shuns. People getting all churchy and doing all kinds of worshippy things, bobbing up and down, going through all kinds of motions, giving worship big licks with prayer rugs and smoke and liturgies and who knows what else, and God hates it.

Listen to the word of the Lord as given to Amos; 5:21 - 24

I hate, I despise your feasts!

I cannot stand the stench of your solemn assemblies.

22 Even though you offer Me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; for your peace offerings of fattened cattle, I will have no regard.

23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs!

I will not listen to the music of your harps.

24 But let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

The earth is filled with false worship that God hates. Take away from me the noise of your songs! Dead worship performed by dead people. God hates it. He says it's a stench in His Holy nostrils.

That's our contrast this morning to true worship. Elizabeth and Mary both get it right. And we want to get it right, so we spend some time studying the spontaneous worship of two women that was pleasing to God. What can we learn? What can we copy?

and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Stop right there. Acceptable worship begins here. The Holy Spirit of God must join us in worship, or we will be the ones bringing a stench and a miserable noise.

Adams fallen race. Dead in our trespasses and sins. We have no capacity for acceptable, pleasing worship . . . until the Holy Spirit comes and quickens us from the dead. He makes us alive together with Christ.

The Spirit dwells in us and gives us the possibility to worship acceptably. No one is pleasing to God, unless they are cleansed of the filth of sin and made alive together with Christ. Then our praise becomes an acceptable sacrifice to God who designed us for this.

and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?

What was Jesus formula for true worship. The spirit, and . . . what? Spirit and truth. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and she literally shouts with a loud voice . . . true things that glorify God.

So then, Elizabeth is already aware that in Mary's womb, there is a living human who is also kurios, **Lord**. The word is the antithesis to the other word that Mary keeps declaring herself; *slave*.

Living in Mary's womb is the person who owns them both. Master. King. Lord. In this case, they already understand that He is King of Kings. Master of all masters. Lord over every other Lord.

Elizabeth, under the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, in spontaneous worship, declares Mary's unborn child is Saviour, Lord, and indeed, God.

No wonder she declares Mary blessed among women. Elizabeth is carrying the herald of the King of Kings. Mary is carrying the King. Gabriel has brought to them the very **words** of God by which they know these **truths**. Holy Spirit + truth = worship.

And not only do they know, the unborn baby in the womb of Elizabeth leaps for joy at the sound of Mary's voice, the mother of the Lord's voice. *41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb 44 "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.*

We are under the same weight of anticipation as the very creation itself. Romans 8:19 *For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free*

from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

The entire creation waits in anticipation of full redemption. The curse of Adam's sin and the resulting curse of death and corruption will be gone.

When the living human inside of Elizabeth's womb heard the voice of the mother of the One who will reverse all of the curses, that baby leaped for joy. The joy of anticipation. The curse reversed. Wickedness crushed.

45 “And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.”

Zacharias didn't believe the message, and he suffered, indeed was still suffering when Mary came in month 6. He didn't believe and his mouth was struck dumb.

Mary heard about the miracle with Elizabeth and Zacharias and believed the message. The word of God. The truth. Worship includes the truth of the Word of God and also important, faith in those words. Believing the truth

We still believe today. We have in this book the unveiling of redemption and the end of sin in it's finality. That hasn't happened yet, but we believe, like Mary, when God speaks, He also brings it to pass.

We aren't visited by Gabriel. We have the finished book. The

scriptures are closed. The once for all delivered to the Saints faith has been revealed for all time in the pages of this venerated book.

We have this in common with Mary and Elizabeth. We are blessed . . . if . . . we believe the report. Holy Spirit. Word of God. Faith, believing.

Elizabeth opens her mouth and worship falls from her Holy Spirit filled lips. It's as if she's been waiting 6 months to unload this. The baby leaps for joy at Mary's greeting, and spontaneous worship breaks forth.

It's like what Jesus told the Scribes and Pharisees when He was entering Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey and the people were shouting Hosanna's. The scribes told Him to rebuke the ones crying out for their blasphemy.

And Jesus said, if these are silent, the stones will cry out. That's about where Elizabeth and Mary are at after 6 months of holding in the joy of being selected by God to be a part of the final solution to sin. Worship bursts forth. First Elizabeth,

And then Mary bursts forth like a dam has broken. Incredible worship! Where does a young teen-ager get this kind of bible knowledge.

We have to stand in awe of the worship that pours out of Mary, by the Holy Spirit! Awesome worship.

46 And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord,

47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

Elizabeth called Mary the mother of her Lord. Mary likewise tells us who the Lord is; *My soul exalts the **Lord**, 47 And my spirit has*

rejoiced in God my Savior

Living inside this young teen age girl is the Lord, who is God and Savior. As wonderful as Mary is, she acknowledges that she like Elizabeth, needs a savior. God, the Lord, is also Savior.

48 "For He has had regard for the humble state of His slave;

Your version probably has bonds slave or something like that. The word is doule which is the feminine version of doulos. It means slave.

Mary recognised her position before God. He is Master, Lord, she is slave. Her humility is not false. But she also understands privilege;

For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

Jewish women got rank from how important their prodigy became. If you had sons, and they became prominent, your status was raised up. It's what Jewish mothers did. The more important your sons, the more important you.

And Mary understands, she just won the Jewish mother lottery.

*49 "For the Mighty One has done great things for me;
And holy is His name.*

The rest of Mary's worship, this song of worship that rivals anything her father David ever wrote in the Psalms, reflects backwards to this person she has just identified.

The Mighty One. This is a messianic name. And as we look back in 20-20 hindsight, we now recognize that the Mighty One of Israel

is none other than Jesus.

Pre-incarnate Christ. Christ as He walked this earth. And post resurrection Christ who is glorified in heaven and will return in power to crush Satan and all evil. This is the mighty one of Israel.

*49 "For the Mighty One has done great things for me;
And holy is His name.*

This will make your head explode. It was because of the Mighty One of Israel that a young virgin was pregnant and would give birth to the Mighty One of Israel.

The rest of her song is about this person, who dwelled inside her.

*50 "AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER
GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.*

Perhaps the single most noteworthy truth that would describe our current generation in America and indeed the whole world, because America always lags slightly behind the rest of the world's secularism, but the defining truth of America and the world is that there is no fear of God.

Secularisms great feat, along with science and learning, was to eliminate God. God is banished from belief, banished from our schools, banished from our conversations, banished. Gone.

In fact people like me who would be insane enough to remind anyone at all that there is a God who owns everything and has declared what is righteous and what is sin, we are rapidly becoming a liability to this generation. They label people like me as haters.

To fear God and to tell someone else that there is a God and He should be feared, is to be a hater. A liability. A person apart. A person to be labeled and watched, which by the way, is becoming increasingly easier to do.

Little Mary. She probably weighs in at 80 pounds. Just a teen-age girl. The least important person in Israel. But listen to an 80 pound girl tell you why you need to fear and honor the Mighty One of Israel

*51 "He has done mighty deeds with His arm;
He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.*

*52 "He has brought down rulers from their thrones,
And has exalted those who were humble.*

Stop right there for a moment. Hate Trump. Love Trump. Whatever. No one will argue that Mr. Trump, love him or hate him, is not described by the words of Mary here.

Him and a thousand other rulers of this cosmos like him. They are dupes of Satan who is behind them all, ruling this world. Proud boasters.

But Mary reminds us here that the Mighty One of Israel is sovereign over all of them. He alone can bring every proud and lofty ruler of this cosmos crashing down to nothing. And He will. In His time.

He will scatter the proud. He will bring down rulers from thrones. And the Mighty One of Israel will exalt those who were humble.

It would be a fine study to take Jesus words in Matthew 5 in the Beatitudes and compare them almost word for word with Mary's

great Psalm that we are looking at this morning. God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

*53 "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS;
And sent away the rich empty-handed.
54 "He has given help to Israel His servant,
In remembrance of His mercy,
55 As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and his descendants forever."*

Mary's psalm of worship and praise looks to the beginning, the promises to Abraham, and looks to the end, when the promises to Israel and indeed, every tongue and every nation, the whole earth will be blessed and will call the Mighty One of Israel, blessed.

How blessed Mary was to be honored by God to be used to bring the King of all Kings into this world.

56 And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home.

It's no accident that Carl or Melissa begins our time of worship with a prayer asking for forgiveness and asking for the Holy Spirit to come and dwell with us and empower us to worship.

And it's no accident that after our songs, we open up the Word of God and spend serious time studying this book. Verse by verse. Book by book. Precept by precept. Here a little, there a little. Because in doing that we strive to offer meaningful worship.

The Holy Spirit dwelling in cleansed holy people, and the truths of the Word of God are what combine to be worship. Acceptable worship.

Do you understand that the possibilities are in our favor? Because 17 people offering humble acceptable worship are more valuable to God than 17,000 people who are sending up the noise and stench of unacceptable worship.