

Worship at Home – 15th August 2021
The Blessed Virgin Mary

Prepared by Rev Gareth Erlandson, Curate



Prayer to start

Almighty God,
who looked upon the lowliness
of the Blessed Virgin Mary
and chose her to be
the mother of your only Son:
grant that we who are redeemed by his blood
may share with her in the glory
of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Bible Readings (Galatians 4:4-7 & Luke 1:46-55)

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

Mary’s Song

And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.
His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”

Thought

When you think of Mary, I wonder what comes to mind for you? This is not an easy question, because the mother of Jesus has been thought of in such a wide variety of ways down the centuries of tradition. But this week, we could think about one thing that unites all of the different views – that through Mary, God proves that he can act to save humanity in even the most seemingly impossible of circumstances.

The context of our readings from Galatians is Paul saying that humanity has been striving for centuries to adhere to the Law of Moses, but all in vain because we're all human and susceptible to the evil forces of the world. But the good news is that we know liberty and redemption because the one and only human being who could keep the law perfectly – Jesus Christ – has sacrificed himself for us on the cross. If it had not been for Mary's "yes" we would have been kept in the impossible bondage of sin. Through Mary's acceptance of God's plan for her, the Saviour is born and the impossible is overcome.

What impossible situations do we find ourselves facing at the moment?

But we find even better news for us in Mary's example. We are not simply saved through the birth of her son; we are invited into relationship with God. We are filled with his Spirit, as Paul reminds us, and so we are at liberty to call God *Abba* – Father in formal words, but in the Aramaic context, much more like Daddy! Again, this relationship starts with Mary – she allowed herself to be filled with the Holy Spirit and so became one with Jesus as she carried him in her womb. She is the prototype for our life in Christ through the Spirit.

How do we feel about our relationship with God at the moment?

So, it is in response to this intimate relationship with God that Mary sings her great prayer of praise and hope – commonly known as the Magnificat. Through her words, Mary most certainly acknowledges that eternal salvation is coming near for humanity, through her. But Mary also boldly claims that salvation is as earthly as it is heavenly. God will come to rescue the poor, the hungry and the oppressed. This requires faith. When we're stuck in those impossible situations, this can be difficult. Through her song, however, Mary demonstrates perfect faith in God's promises – looking back through the centuries to the covenant the Almighty made with Abraham. She has responded to Gabriel in trust and she now embarks on motherhood with trust.

What can we learn from Mary about trusting in God's promises?

Prayers to end

Lord, inspired by Mary, may we trust that you will act to rescue us from seemingly impossible situations, may we cherish and nurture our relationship with you and may we be filled with faith in your power to save. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Please do get in touch if you want to talk about anything.

*Services on 15th August: Holy Communion at Emmanuel 9:30am and Hope 11am
God bless – Adam (01978 760439) and Gareth (07731 827988)*