

December 22, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (The 4<sup>th</sup> Advent, Christmas Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "My Soul Glorifies the Lord"

— Mary's Magnificat —

Text: Luke 1:46~48

**1:46 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord**

**1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

**1:48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,**

#### Introduction

We celebrate Christmas this week. **"Merry Christmas!"**

We have the fourth Advent Sunday today. We lit the candles of **the Advent Wreath** every Sunday. We will light the fourth candle today. Each candle has a symbolic meaning as below:

- ① Expectation
- ② Preparation
- ③ Light
- ④ Promise

The candle of the Fourth Advent refers to **Promise**. Jesus who was born on Christmas Day was the promised baby. The day is celebrated by many people throughout generations, cultures and races. It is the birth of the baby that God promised. The Israelites were expecting its fulfillment. They were under control of the Roman Empire and were looking forward to the Messiah who would make them free.

God is faithful so He absolutely fulfills His promises. He has personality and is the One of truth. Today's Scripture is a story about Mary who was mother of Jesus. God **promised to bless** Mary.

As we understand from the context, Elizabeth said to Mary that the child who was in her womb would be blessed by God. Listening her word, Mary praised God. It is the **Magnificat**, which is called **Mary's Song**.

The Gospel of Luke records as below—

**1:46 And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord**

**1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

**1:48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,**

Mary’s Song is composed of three parts as below—

- 1) Praising God’s Mercy      Verses 46—50
- 2) Praising God’s Great Authority      Verses 51—53
- 3) Praising God’s Truth to the Israelites      Verses 54—55

What was Mary like? Today, let’s study the first part of Mary’s Song and listen to the Lord’s voice.

### Main Points

#### **1. My Soul Glorifies the Lord.**

1) What is **my soul**? The Bible teaches that man is consisted of three parts: the body, the heart (or soul), and the spirit. The soul has three functions: **thought**, **emotion** and **will**. Mary’s soul was moved by these three things and glorified God. To glorify God means **to lift up the Lord high** “*Meine Seele erhebt den Herrn*” according to the Bible translated by Martin Luther.

Then, what does it mean **to lift up the Lord high** by **thought**, **emotion** and **will**?

⇒ It means to glorify God with all your heart, mind and strength.

We see Mary’s simple faith.

Do we glorify God with these three things? We may do with one, or two of them. Mary really glorified the lord with all three things. We understand how Mary was blessed by the Lord and was filled with God’s spirit (the Holy Spirit).

2) Why did Mary glorify the Lord?

Was the reason that she had experienced special things in her life? Why was she able to glorify the Lord from the bottom of her soul? At that time Mary was young (12~15years old?) and had not much experience of life.

Moreover, she wasn’t yet married. She could become an unmarried mother, a single mother in

today's terminology. In Jewish society, this was not acceptable and people around her would make a fool of her and surely exclude her from their society.

Even so, she accepted the angel's and Elizabeth's word and glorified the Lord from the bottom of her soul. It is difficult to understand her attitude, but she really accepted what the angel had said, that she would conceive the baby as a message from God. We understand her simple faith.

3) Mary must have been worried and afraid. However, she accepted it by faith. She willingly accepted a big task of bearing a baby (a mother's job).

She said,

**1:48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,**

Mary called herself **a servant girl** who serves her master, "*Niedrigkeit seiner Magd*" in German. She understood that she was a mere humble **servant** and that she was not superior to anybody. She clearly realized her true self.

My friends, people in this world usually choose able workers, however, when God does His work, He chooses ordinary persons. He doesn't choose very excellent persons so that no man boasts of himself.

### **{Illustration}**

**People of our society rank those who master a certain way, as a top-class, a second-class or a third-class person. If he wants to be the best of the best in a certain field, he needs to meet at least two conditions as below,**

- ① **To be instructed by a good coach. The coach does not always speak well of him. One needs to experience pain and hardship. The man who wants to be the best of the best absolutely needs a good coach.**
- ② **To have a lot of good competitors. A good competitive spirit makes him improve and grow.**

In that sense, Mary was not the best of the best. She was from Nazareth, a small village of about hundred people. There was a saying in those days, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

**1:48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.**

It refers to the humblest maid servant. German: *Niedrigkeit seiner Magd*

She glorified the Lord from the bottom of her soul.

## 2. Blessing of Those Who Trust in God

### 1) Accepting A Situation (Unhappiness)

As I mentioned before, Mary's situation was disgraceful in the society at that time. It was not accepted or allowed. On top of that, she didn't choose to conceive and bear Jesus. She was just put in the situation from above.

She might be confused and worried, yet she accepted her situation (unhappiness).

We are able to praise the Lord in a good situation; however, she was in jeopardy. She must have really trusted in God, so she was able to glorify Him.

**1:46 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord**

**1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

She continued to glorify the Lord.

### 2) Mary Called Herself Blessed One.

**1:48 From now on all generations will call me blessed,**

The original phrase is, "All generation will praise me." The verse is a bit misleading. It seems that Mary is saying she is great because she is mother of the Messiah. Then, what does the verse mean, **"From now on all generations will call me blessed"?**

Mary's mind is probably as below —

1. Mary understood that she was unworthy to be chosen as mother of the Messiah. She truly realized it. Even though, she said **"for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. (1:48)**

It is just God's grace and blessing. Therefore, she said that she was blessed.

2. Showing God's glory through herself

She thought that she was blessed so that God's glory was revealed to the Israelites and people of the world (the Gentiles) through her body. The Lord is the great One and worthy to be glorified and worshiped. The Lord's glory was revealed through her. *Niedrigkeit seiner Magd.*

Jesus said in the Gospel of John,

**John15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.**

Jesus said that we are not servants but friends. How amazing! The servants who were in a humble situation were given the status of friends of God who created the heavens and the earth.

Mary glorified God, **“From now on all generations will call me blessed”** according to two points above.

### **3) The Attitudes of Those Who Trust in God**

We learn the attitudes who trust in God like Mary did.

- ② The fact is that we are also unworthy to be chosen by God.
- ③ The other one is that God’s glory is revealed through us.

He who trusts in God leads life with these two attitudes, doesn’t he?

The Lord watches us carefully every day, every hour and even every minute. How thankful! The Mighty God does this for us.

The author of Psalms praises the Lord as below—

**Psalm 126:1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed.**

**126:2 Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, The LORD has done great things for them.”**

**126:3 The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.**

The psalm above records that the Israelites were filled with joy and praised God when they were made free from Babylonian captivity.

**{Illustration} In the 1970s**

**Rev. Gerhard Hamm, a world circuit evangelist, who returned to his country from Siberia once quoted the Scripture above and said to me. I never forget what he said. He, who was under sentence of life imprisonment, returned to Germany, a free country.**

**He said in a tearful voice, “I can’t believe it!”**

**126:2 Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, The LORD has done great things for them.”**

This is the blessed testimony that he, who really trusts in God, shares. It is reality like a dream  
⇒ It is only God’s grace.

The Mighty God fulfilled it. God worked on the humble servant.

Mary said,

**1:49 “for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.”**

My friends, please pay attention!

Mary looks to the future.

**“From now on all generations will call me blessed”**

What fearless words she uttered!

**{Illustration} The Unforeseeable Next Decade**

- **30 years ago, the Berlin Wall broke down.**
- **20 years ago, the Pager Era.**
- **10 years ago, the Convenient Cellular Phone Era.**
- **Today, the Internet has changed the world.**

However, we cannot foresee the future. Nobody knows the future.

God never changes, in the past, in the present and in the future.

**Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.**

**Ephesians 3:18 ...may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.**

**3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.**

Those who believe in God are able to have a perspective for the future. God, who never changes, keeps watching you carefully like He did to Mary.

I am unworthy to be chosen, however, I am invited to today’s worship service.

As God revealed His glory through Mary, He wants to reveal His glory through you. How wonderful! Those who believe in God are the ones who accept things in future through faith.

Let’s trust in God who is the Lord!

**Conclusion**

Title of the Message: “My Soul Glorifies the Lord”

— Mary's Magnificat —

Today we have Christmas worship. Mary, Jesus' mother, glorified God by the Magnificat that is called Mary's Song.

**1:46 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord**

**1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

What kind of woman was Mary like? ⇒ An ordinary woman

Those who trust in the unchangeable God receive God's blessing like Mary.

The conditions to receive God's blessing are:

1. To accept the present situation(unhappiness) by faith.

2. To accept the things in future by faith.

\* God bless you !