

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY WORKSHOP

Practical Wisdom for your Life

December 27th, 2020, 11:30 AM via Zoom

Singing Christmas

The Song of Mary

A bird does not sing because he has an answer. A bird sings because she has a song.

Joan Walsh Anglund

If you can talk, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance.

African Proverb

If there were no music, life would be a mistake.

Nietzsche

Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and cannot remain silent

Victor Hugo, Novelist

Whoever sings prays twice

St. Augustine

The best imagery for God is that which is capable of being sung. Next to silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible mystery is music.

W. Paul Jones

Centering question

What is your favorite Christmas carol? Why?

Luke 1:39-56

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be ^[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Luke 1:39-56, continued

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

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

Discussion questions and background

1. Mary goes to her cousin, Elizabeth because the angel had told her she was pregnant. Why is that important? How does Elizabeth’s pregnancy confirm what the angel told her?
2. How does Elizabeth further confirm it? What happens to the child in her womb?
3. Why do you think Mary sings? What does that tell you about Mary’s state of mind?
4. What does her song actually say?
5. The song has a number of revolutionary reversals – what are they? – What happens to the proud, the poor, the rich?
6. What does this song tell you about Mary’s expectations of Jesus?
7. Did Jesus fulfill them? If so, how did Jesus do so? How did Jesus scatter the proud or lift up the lowly or feed the hungry or keep the promise to Israel?
8. How does Mary’s song give us a fuller, even more revolutionary picture of Jesus?

Closing thoughts

There must be always remaining in every life, some place for the singing of angels; some place for that which in and of itself is beautiful. Old burdens become lighter; deep and ancient wounds lose much of their old hurting. Despite all the crassness of life, all the hardness and harsh discords, life is saved by the singing of angels.

Howard Thurman, The Mood of Christmas