

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Muskego, Wisconsin
December 16, 2018**

**Series: "The Hopes and Fears of All the Years
Are Met in Thee Tonight"**

M'm! M'm! Good!

Luke 1:46-55

"M'm! M'm! Good! M'm! M'm! Good! That's what Campbell's soups are! M'm! M'm! Good!"

Now isn't that one of your favorite Christmas carols? Probably not, but I've found it a good memory device to help me learn more about worship from the Virgin Mary.

Our lesson for today is her song of praise after receiving the news that she would conceive and give birth to a child as a virgin and that this child would be her Savior. Notice the "m's" in both parts of the song.

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

"M'm! M'm! Good!" The Virgin Mary worships God as merciful and mighty.

1. Sing “M’m! M’m! Good!” for Yourself

Why does Mary celebrate his mercy?

Because she admitted her need for mercy. She confessed,

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

She confesses that God has looked at her humble state. He has examined it.

Was God examining the fact that she didn’t have much money or that she came from a backwater town called Nazareth? Do you think God thinks more of you if you have money or come from the right side of town? Of course not!

What did God see when he examined her. He saw guilt and sin. He saw a woman who confessed her need for a Savior.

But he also saw faith. She uses a word of faith when she calls God “my Savior.”

What made Mary so confident of God’s mercy?

As you read over this song, it is evident that Mary was a student of the Old Testament, especially of the prophet Isaiah. She says about God, “Holy is his name.” Twenty-five times Isaiah calls God “the Holy One of Israel.”

What does the name “Holy One of Israel” bring to your mind?

I see Isaiah’s call into ministry in Isaiah 6. In a vision Isaiah sees God’s throne room with seraphs or angels flying about and calling, “Holy! Holy! Holy is the Lord God almighty.”

That holiness terrified Isaiah. He cried out, “I am ruined for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

God’s holiness is like a bright light shining into the deepest, darkest parts of our lives. It exposes the foul words and works and thoughts in every one of us.

But “holy is his name” is also good news. God’s holiness also determines a way for unholy people like Isaiah and us to come into his presence. Isaiah described what happened next in his vision:

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

This is God's mercy in action. In her song, Mary admits her need for this mercy and confesses her faith in that mercy of God. God is "my Savior."

The other term that Mary uses for God is "Mighty One," a term that Isaiah used more than any other prophet. What mighty things did Isaiah foretell?

If you know Isaiah, you know that he foretold that God would bring the people of Israel back from exile in Babylon. But that was just a little foretaste of a greater deliverance. What really stands out about Isaiah's prophecy is how often he speaks very specifically about the Savior. In fact, right after Isaiah sees God as the Holy One of Israel in Isaiah 6, God makes a mighty promise to King Ahaz in Isaiah 7. "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son. And you will call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

God had done this mighty thing for Mary. She conceived and gave birth to a son.

Imagine you are Luke, the author of this gospel. Luke was not an eyewitness himself. He tells us at the beginning of his gospel that he is a careful historian, talking with the eyewitnesses. As you read the first two chapters of his gospel, it is obvious Mary was one of those eyewitnesses. Just imagine sitting there and hearing Mary tell you this. "I knew this was impossible! I couldn't have a child as a virgin. But I also knew that God had done miracles in the past. He could do this one too."

This is the heart and core of Mary's worship. She receives God's mercy and experiences God's might. And so she offers up to God her praise. Mary magnifies her Savior. Yes, her God is "M'm! M'm! Good!"

And this is what our worship is all about. This is true whether you come here into this place of worship or if you are sitting at your kitchen table doing a family devotion. We come first to receive... mercy from God that we don't deserve... the might of our God working the miracle of faith and giving us the hope of eternal life. We celebrate that God is "M'm! M'm! Good!" And then not just Mary magnifies the Lord, but "we magnifies" the Lord. "M'm! M'm! Good!" That's what Mary's baby is. That's what our Savior is. M'm! M'm! Good!

2. Sing "M'm! M'm! Good!" for Others

But Mary's song doesn't end with celebrating God's mercy and might to her. She also proclaims that God is "M'm! M'm! Good!" for others.

⁵¹ *He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.*

⁵² *He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.*

⁵³ *He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.*

*⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”*

Notice her words speak warning to the proud, to the rich, to those who think they have everything and lack nothing.

Why does she sing this? Because we are not pure “spirit.” We have a sinful nature that tries to fill the hole in our hearts with success or wealth or honor or drugs or alcohol or the “I’m better than you” comparisons. So we need someone to speak to the pride in our hearts and expose it for what it is. Mary speaks a word of warning: “He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.” The Old Testament is full of examples of that.

But to the lowly and humble, God fills them, he lifts them up. He remembers his promises of mercy that he gave to Abraham and to us.

Are you hungry for God’s peace, God’s hope, God’s joy? When we are hungry, God promises to fill us. That is why we are here. Not only do we need fellow Christians to speak to the pride in our hearts, we also need them to speak to us as the humble, to fill us with God’s promises, recalling the great things God has done in the past for each of us.

Then too we come here to offer to others the same care that we need from them. We are here to offer words of rebuke to the proud, and to speak words of hope to the lowly, recalling the great things that God has done for us. We are here to give encouragement to others.

Mary said all generations will call me blessed. It is true. We will bless her as Mary, the mother of God. Blessed is she whom God the Father chose to give flesh and blood to his eternal Son.

But I will also bless her as a worship role model. Her song is the song of a humble Christian. It has become my song. “M’m! M’m! Good! M’m! M’m! Good! That’s what Mary’s baby is! M’m! M’m! Good!” Mercy and might. Received for myself. Shared with others. M’m! M’m! Good! Mary magnified God. Me magnifying God. That’s what worship is.

So the next time I enjoy a can of Campbell’s soup, I’ll remember this handy summary of Mary’s song and a guide for my worship. Mercy and Might. M’m! M’m! Good! Amen.

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My Next Steps to Magnify the Lord

- **Memorize** Mary's song Luke 1:46-55 as an outline for your own worship of the Savior...
 - Receive his mercy and might
 - Praise his mercy and might
 - Receive his mercy and might from others
 - Share his mercy and might with others
- **Mediate** on God's mercy and might by reading the Christmas accounts: Matthew 1, Matthew 2, Luke 1, Luke 2.
- **Invite** friends and relatives to experience God's mercy and might with you this Christmas at St. Paul's.

GroupWork

1. What was your favorite Campbell's soup when you were a kid?
2. Read together Mary's Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55. What words or phrases do you find most meaningful?
3. Mary's song shows she is a student of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah. Isaiah calls God "the Holy One of Israel" 25 times. What does Isaiah's call in Isaiah 6:1-8 tell you about God as the Holy One of Israel? Is it good news or bad news?
4. Isaiah calls God "the Mighty One" five times. Read his first use of the term in Isaiah 1:24-28. Again, is it good news or bad news to know that your God is the Mighty One?
5. Read again Luke 1:50-55 as Mary applies God's mercy and might to others. Who are the "rich" and who are the "hungry"? Who have reason to be afraid? Who have reason to take comfort?
6. We have experienced God's mercy and might that we might share them with others. List the people you would like to invite to worship with you this Christmas. Join together and pray for them.