



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Luke 1:46-56

“Mary’s Celebration of Christmas”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now today we are looking at Luke chapter 1 verse 46 through verse 56 for our Scripture reading. And this as you know is the famous section, so famous that it is given the name *Magnificat* because in the Latin translation of this passage, Mary’s opening words, My soul exalts the Lord,” in the Latin translation, the first word is *magnificat*. And so as a result of that, this is called the Magnificat. We begin reading in verse 46,

“And Mary said, my soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the humble state of his bond slave: for, behold, from this time on, all generations will count me blessed. For the mighty one has done great things for me and holy is his name. And his mercy is upon generation after generation towards those who fear him. He has done mighty deeds with his arm; he hath scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty handed. He has given help to Israel his servant in remembrance of his mercy; as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his offspring for ever. (Now you may have noticed how I read that last section, because I think that it’s possible to misunderstand the meaning of the text. The expression, As he spoke to our fathers, is

really a parenthetical expression and we should not read the last line as, As he spoke to our fathers as he spoke to Abraham and his offspring forever because obviously that’s not really true except in a more spiritual sense. But that last line goes with the line that precedes the parenthetical phrase, as he spoke to our fathers. In remembrance of his mercy, that is his mercy to Abraham and to his offspring forever.) And Mary stayed with her at about three months and then returned to her home.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his inspired word and we bow together now for a time of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the word of God and particularly for the section that we have just read because it so clearly shows to us the attitude that we too should have with reference to the coming of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for these days and we thank Thee for the thoughts of the incarnation that constantly come to our minds throughout the days of the Christmas season and we pray that our meditations may be significant, perceptive and fruitful in our daily lives. We’re grateful too for the privilege of Christian testimony to him. Enable us to take advantage of the opportunities that we do have to say something that may be of help to some that don’t have the privilege that we may have of familiarity with Holy Scripture and the hearing of the ministry of the word of God. We thank Thee for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we wish in this season to exalt his name. We thank Thee for the grace that has been shown to us and for the experience of Christian salvation that Thou has given to so many in this auditorium.

And Lord we pray that in the experience of it we may continually be growing and therefore more fruitful in the service of the Lord. We pray for our assembly, the elders, the deacons, others who work and labor in order to see that the ministry of the word is published. And we thank Thee for the day in which we live, for our country. We pray

for the United States of America, for its leadership and we ask Lord that Thou wilt protect us and keep us and if it please Thee, give us in our leadership of this nation, a high regard for the things of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and for the word of God. We thank Thee for those who have requested our prayers and Lord we particularly pray for them. May the aspirations of their hearts and the problems and trials of life find the answer from Thee that would be encouraging and strengthening to them. We thank Thee for all that Thou art able to do and Lord we rest upon the good pleasure of our sovereign God in our affairs. We bring them to Thee encourage and strengthen and give healing in accordance with Thy perfect will. Now we thank Thee for the privilege of singing, of the reading and the ministry of the word of God and may this be a profitable time together and not only now, but through the remainder of the meetings of this day. In Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for today in the ministry of the word of God is Mary’s celebration of Christmas. Whenever I come to Christmas ministry, I always wonder just what really is the usefulness of every Christmas giving some message that pertains particularly to Christmas. And I was often asked by people when I would pass by Christmas, not giving a Christmas message, “Why didn’t you give a Christmas message?” And frequently the desire to continue some series or perhaps feeling that the emphasis upon Christmas once a year, always at this time was a special kind of emphasis that really wasn’t justified in the overall ministry of the word of God. Of course I want to make very plain that the incarnation is one of the really important facts in Christian theology. But it does come up often throughout the year and so to center attention on Christmas sometimes seems an excessive amount of attention to the incarnation as over against other important parts of the word of God. And then I was encouraged a bit by finding our a few years back it had escaped me that in the exposition of the word of God in Geneva, John Calvin never did turn aside from the regular exposition of the word of God and he

expounded the Scriptures largely book by book. He never did turn aside for special days, but continued regardless of the day the exposition. And so I leaned upon that crutch a little and said if Calvin can do it, so can I. But strikingly since I discovered that on Sunday, I’ve been giving Christmas messages and so today, contrary to the pattern established by the great man of faith, John Calvin, we’re going to look at a passage in Luke chapter 1 and our title is I say is Mary’s celebration of Christmas.

At this time of the year I think that most of us should, probably do ask ourselves the question what does Christmas really mean to us and how is it reflected in our everyday life? Does it mean acquisitiveness? And certainly in the case of many of our young people, there is a large measure of that. Does it mean party time? And for many of this it does mean a great deal of that. Or does it mean the traditional routine that is the traditional routine of Christmas? And so many of us it certainly has something of that character. Is it characterized by trivial activities or is it characterized by such things as gratitude to God worshipful praise to our Savior, the extolling of his person and his works? Is there praise for the word of God, for his mercy, his might and as Mary illustrates loyalty to his promises?

Well in a sense, I think Mary is a model for us. She was occupied with God and his promises in the Scriptures having just entered into the experience of the fact that there would be the incarnation of the Son of God through her. And the very fact that Mary’s attention was centered upon the spiritual things of the word of God is I think a very important lesson for us in Christmas. It tells us how we ought to celebrate Christmas. That is we ought to celebrate Christmas by reflection upon the word of God in worshipful praise, in gratitude, in thanksgiving centered in the ministry of God’s word to us. Perhaps you’ve noticed this before; all scholars have noticed it, though I don’t know that it has a great deal of effect on the lives of many of them so far as specific Christian activity is concerned. But Mary’s magnificent is a passage of praise of God taken almost entirely from the word of God. In fact, the one model that stands out for Mary was Hannah’s

prayer of thanksgiving or I should not say prayer, Hannah’s song of thanksgiving because God had answered her prayer and Eli’s prayer for that matter, and had given her a son, Samuel. And if you turned back and read 1 Samuel chapter 2 verse 1 through verse 10 when Hannah went in to the presence of the High Priest and expressed thanksgiving for the gift of Samuel to her, you would find many of the phrases of Hannah’s song are phrases that are found in Mary’s song, in her magnificat. And those that are not found in Hannah’s song are almost all of them found somewhere else in the Old Testament.

In other words, it’s quite clear from this that Mary was a student of Holy Scripture that the great promises of the Old Testament and the Divine flow of the revelation filled her heart and mind. And in the presence of Elisabeth when she came into Elisabeth’s presence, and Elisabeth spoke to her, her cousin about how the babe, for she was pregnant about six months, how the babe leapt in her womb when Mary entered her presence. These things that flowed from Mary were the things that were the result of many many perhaps years at least months of meditation upon Holy Scripture. And if we’d like a model for what Christmas should be to us in the spiritual sense, it seems to me we could hardly have a better model than the Virgin Mary.

Luke is the gospel of songs. For example we have the beatitude of Elisabeth just previous to this. We have the *Benedictus* of Zacharias. We have the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon given last night by one of the children. We have the Evangel of the Angel of the Lord in chapter 2. We have the Gloria of the angelic hosts. Luke has always been known as the gospel of songs, and this the *Magnificat* is one of the greatest. And so I don’t want to preach to you this morning, I’d like to meditate for a bit on this particular section of Holy Scripture. And what I’d like to do is to just briefly read through this section, make a few comments about its structure, say a word about one or two points that are of significance and then close with some lessons that I think that we might profit from as we look at Mary’s *Magnificat*.

Now it’s a meditation then, on Mary’s outlook. One characteristic thing about birds is that they sing at dawn and sunrise. Some of you don’t like that, and some of us are so deaf to it we don’t even hear them. And there’s another thing about some birds, some birds come and try to drill holes in the side of your house and I’ve had one like that too. But normally, good birds, spiritual birds, they sing at dawn and sunrise. And I think it’s fitting that here at the beginning of the New Testament the last strains of Old Testament Psalm should prelude the birth of the Lord Jesus. And so Mary is the voice by which the Old Testament comes to its end with a beautiful song of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so you can think of the early morning and the birds singing and hear the words from the Old Testament, the phraseology of the spiritual leaders of the Old Testament being reflected here as the new age begins. And Mary notice rejoices in God’s salvation in God’s holiness and in God’s might. Verse 46 we read,

“My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the humble state of his bond slave: for, behold, from this time on, all generations will count me blessed. For the mighty one has done great things for me and holy is his name.”

The heart of Mary exalts in his surprising goodness to her, awakened by Elisabeth’s presence and greeting. Now of course when we think about the Virgin Mary we think about the Virgin Mary after nineteen hundred years of myths have been propagated about her. But the word of God has a marvelous way of shattering false myths. And one of them is the myth of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. I find it rather strange but many Christians confuse the Immaculate Conception with the virgin birth of our Lord. The virgin birth of our Lord is simply the doctrine that Mary was a virgin and that the Holy Spirit supernaturally conceived our Lord’s human nature in her womb and he was born of Mary before she had had intercourse with any man. So the

virgin birth primarily has to do with the Lord that holy thing that came from Mary was the product of the overshadowing supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the highest shall overshadow thee wherefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called Son of God.”

But the Immaculate Conception is something else. The Immaculate Conception is the doctrine that Mary was conceived and born immaculate. That is without the stain of original sin. So when we think of the Immaculate Conception of Mary we are thinking about something that is not found in the word of God at all. In fact this dogma of Mary’s Immaculate Conception was defined by Pope Pius IX in 1884 in the apostolic constitution in *apbobolus deus*. And in the words of the papal pronouncement, “The Virgin Mary at the first moment of her conception by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God in virtue of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Savior of the human race was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin.” And so it’s part of the build up of the Virgin Mary to the ultimate place that Mary becomes the one through whom we come to the Lord Jesus and to God. In fact, many of you have seen pictures of the Virgin Mary with the Latin expression under it *Ad Yasem par Maryot*. And that is, If we want to really come to our Lord we should come to our Lord through his mother. And so Mary has the exalted place that Scripture does not really give her in the Roman Catholic Church.

In Luke chapter 11 in verse 27 and verse 28 we have a passage that bears on this point,

“And it came about while he said these things one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to him blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed but he said, On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

Now one notices from the expressions of Mary that she would have been startled, surprised, very hurt and disturbed if someone had spoken of her as the Roman Catholic Church speaks of her today. Look at the text again, “My soul exalts the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” Now the very fact that the Scripture says “God my Savior” and Mary is the authority for it indicates quite clearly that Mary regarded herself as a sinner. She regarded herself as needing salvation. She did not in the slightest think of herself as being born in any other way than any other Jewish woman. In other words, she was born a natural birth and she was born with the condemnation of Adam’s sin and born with a sin nature. And she needed a savior. She expresses her faith as a faith in God my Savior.

Mary herself furnishes no cause whatsoever for Mariolatry, or the worship of Mary, as has taken place down through the years. In fact, it’s just the opposite. Do you notice as you read through this section that Mary while she speaks about the way, in which God has blessed her, doesn’t even tell us precisely the way in which she has been blessed? It’s obvious what is meant. But she doesn’t say, she doesn’t promulgate, she doesn’t publish far and wide, “I’m pregnant by the Holy Spirit of God.” As matter of fact, with good maidenly reserve it seems to me, she never mentions specifically the way in which God has blessed her.

And when we say all of this, of course we’re not saying anything with regard to Mary that is anything less than great appreciation for her. The fact that she doesn’t yield to Mariolatry and the very fact that she glorifies the Lord God is the greatness, part of the greatness of the Virgin Mary. And the fact that she was chosen by God to be the mother of our Lord is a remarkable indication of the degree of spirituality that characterizes this woman of God and the fact that as she broke forth and spoke the magnificat, we have an indication of the kind of godly life that this lovely woman had lived. And in fact, she herself expresses surprise over the blessing that God has given her. Notice again these words, “My soul exalts the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he had



regard the humble state of his bond slave: for, behold.” In other words, there’s really surprise reflected in the language of Mary. She’s really caught up in the fact that God has stooped to someone of low estate to be the mother of the Messianic King who is to come. “For behold, from this time on all generations shall count me blessed.” And so Mary is it seems to me a model of the way in which we should respond to the blessings of God giving him the glory for the things that have transpired.

“God my Savior,” what a world of thought is reflected in that. The Roman church has strayed so far from the truth with regard to this that since the time of the incarnation, some of the popes have gone out of their way to say that we must believe in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in the same degree with which we believe in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now if we are to believe in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the same degree that we are to believe in the Immaculate Conception, and when we look at the word of God and find no support what so ever for the Immaculate Conception, what does that do for the incarnation? It causes us really to believe with less assurance and authority and certainty the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. And what’s further so striking about this is that this is promulgated as Christian doctrine and as Christian doctrine which we must believe. In fact, if we don’t believe it we are guilty of denying the Christian faith.

Now if we look back in past history, who are the individuals who have not believed in this doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church? Well there’s Bona Ventura, very prominent in Catholic history and believe it or not, Thomas Aquinas, he didn’t believe it. He’s the one who’s responsible for Roman Catholic doctrine today. You cannot disagree with Thomas Aquinas. You don’t have to agree with him on everything, but if the church has spoken Thomas Aquinas is the authority for the things for which they speak and two which they speak. But Aquinas didn’t believe it. Looking at the history of the Immaculate Conception, this was a very divisive doctrine down through the centuries of the Roman Catholic Church. Mary shatters it all with her words, “God my Savior.”

Now when she speaks about the way in which she praises God with rejoicing in his salvation, his holiness and might, she states the ground of it in verse 49 and verse 50, “For the mighty one has done great things for me and holy is his name. And his mercy is upon generation after generation towards those who fear him.” So it’s his might, his holiness, his eternal mercy that moves the Virgin Mary. And then she rejoices in God’s future works. In verse 51 through verse 53, and I should say that if you read these verses, you will notice they are put in the past tense, for example you’re in verse 51,

“He has done mighty deeds with his arm, he has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart he has brought down rulers from their thrones, he has exalted those who were humble, he has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty handed.”

Now if you read the Old Testament, many many times in the Old Testament, the things that are future are put in the past tense because they’re so certain. And in fact Hebrew scholars speak often of the prophetic perfect. That is in the Hebrew text. So that it’s likely that Mary is speaking of the future of the consummation of the promises of God and as she looks into the future she recognizes the fact that these are the things that the Lord God is going to do and they are so certain that they can be put in the past tense.

Now if one were to attempt to argue the other point that is that she’s speaking about things past, that’s alright too, so far as the doctrine of the word of God is concerned. But it’s my feeling from the fact that this is Old Testament Hebrew poetry that we are looking at Mary looking into the future and the coming of the Messianic King and the kingdom that he will bring and so she looks and she describes what he does in order to accomplish bringing to its fruition the great Messianic program.

And finally, in verse 54 and verse 55, she rejoices in God’s covenantal purpose. And we read, “He has given help to Israel his servant in remembrance of his mercy; just

as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his offspring for ever.” This is a marvelous expression of Mary’s relating everything ultimately to the covenant promises of the Old Testament. And she sees in God’s marvelous dealings with her another step along the way to the accomplishment of the word of God. Now I wish it were possible for us to turn to a number of passages in the Old Testament which have to do with just what she’s talking about. God has remembered his mercy, his Abrahamic promises and therefore they are going to come to pass through the one who is to be born from me.

Now in conclusion, I’d like to spend the remainder of our time clarifying her celebration of his birth and seeing how she models the proper Christian attitude in our celebration of the incarnation for us. First of all, I lay stress on this and I think it needs special stress. Mary’s mind was stored with Holy Scripture. There’s no question about the fact that this is the thing that stands out. Her mind was stored with Holy Scripture. The Magnificat reveals how much grace excelled in her through the word of God. As the apostle in Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16 exhorts the Colossians, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.” Well here is a marvelous illustration of it. The word of God richly dwelled in the heart of Mary. And the thought of the incarnation produced in her the wellspring of the word of God and praise of God through the things that she had learned about the Savior who was to come.

And second, I’d like for you to notice the dominant attitude or grace of humility that expresses itself in Mary. Notice how she speaks of herself. Now mind you, there has never been another woman, sinful woman, one who can say, “God my savior,” who has been blessed more highly than Mary. But notice how she speaks of herself. She speaks of herself as a woman of low estate. She speaks of the humble state of his bond slave. She speaks about the fact that the Mighty One has done great things for me. But not holy is my name, holy is Thy name. All though this magnificent song she expresses the humility that should characterize everyone who is the object of the blessing of God. And if there is one thing that she does not ascribe to herself, it’s any of the accolades that have

been given to the Virgin Mary by the church. She’s not called Queen of Heaven as the church calls her. Surprisingly, the term Queen of Heaven is found in the Book of Jeremiah and there it’s used of the false goddesses of the time. Queen of Heaven? No, Mary regards herself as a simple servant of the Lord and one of low estate at that.

Humility is one of the great doctrines and certainly one of the great virtues of the Christian revelation. In fact, someone has said, humility is a strange thing, the moment you think you have it, you have lost it. But an old divine said something more significant than that. He said a man has just as much Christianity as he has humility. And if that’s true in any measure, then of course, Mary has a great grasp of Christian doctrine because she’s characterized by a Christian humility. It’s the grace in a sense that many feel is most becoming the human nature. Above all, it’s the grace that’s within the reach of every converted person as well. One doesn’t have to be rich in order to be humble. One doesn’t have to be learned to be humble, one doesn’t have to be highly gifted in order to be humble, one doesn’t have to be a preacher, God forbid, to be humble. But humility is really the essence of what it means to be a Christian person. And Mary is characterized by humility. That it seems to me is another virtue that should characterize us at Christmas time.

Then notice thirdly, the sister grace of thankfulness. Her heart runs over with rapturous and wondering praise. I can imagine that there were many other marvelous from the Old Testament that were on Mary’s lips as she thought about the way that God had blessed her. Such as for example from Psalm 100 and verse 4, “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise, give thanks to him and bless his name.” That kind of attitude characterized Mary at this time of the year.

And fourthly, Mary was familiar with Israel’s past and future. If we look at those statements that she makes here that I read to you in the past tense, “He has done mighty deeds with his arm; he hath scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts.” And if we look at those things as if she was speaking about the past, then it’s

obvious she was familiar with the past of Israel and she knew about Pharaoh and Moses’ struggle with Pharaoh and she knew about the children of Israel when they entered into Canaan. She knew about David and the Philistines and all of the other struggles that the people of God had had down through the centuries.

But if we look at these things as a reference to the future then too, we see her as a student of the word of God and reflecting upon the ways in which the last days that lie before us the Lord Jesus shall bring in, into this particular world, his magnificent heavenly kingdom. So she was familiar with Israel’s past and future. She was filled with the word of God.

And fifth, she had tremendous regard for the covenantal promises. Notice that everything reaches its climax in verse 54, “He has given help to Israel his servant in remembrance of his mercy; to Abraham, and to his offspring for ever.” They sustained her; they encouraged her in her daily life. And on this particular time in this particular moment, in this existential moment we might say those things that were part of her flowed out of her mouth. Now Mary was not a very emotional type. You can see this from this passage; did you notice how Elisabeth speaks in verse 42? Why when Mary enters Elisabeth’s presence and John the Baptist leaps in her womb, Elisabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, and she cries out with a loud voice. And then she speaks to Mary, “Blessed art thou among women, are you.” Incidentally, notice the past tense. Mary is not a vessel to dispense blessing, she is a vessel that has received blessing. So, it’s not Hail Mary full of grace, but it’s Hail Mary, thou who has been graced. And that’s the point of the text incidentally, that Rome often cites. But any way, she cried out with a loud voice, but when Mary speaks, we read simply, “And Mary said.” This is a calm unemotional that is not overly emotional woman who calmly speaks out of a knowledge that has been hers and out of a kind of life that she had lived to this point in her life. So the covenantal promises are the climax of the song that she sings and they sustained and encouraged her in her daily life. One of the things that made Mary what she really came

to be was the pondering and reflection upon the word of God and specifically, those great covenantal promises that reflected the hope of all of the godly elect remnant in the Nation Israel.

And then sixth, she perceived that the covenant was gratuitous and unconditional, it was free, it cost nothing, it was based on God’s good pleasure. Notice what she says in verse 54, “He has given help to Israel his servant in remembrance of his mercy.” In other words, the covenant drew its mercy pure and simple from the source itself, the word of God and ultimately from God himself. And further, Mary reflects the doctrine of the grace of God in the unconditional gratuitous grace of God before John Calvin came along and she believed it. So you can see the same strain of Christian truth is reflected in the saints down through the centuries, and one can see it in Mary.

And finally, I’d like for you to notice her appreciation of his sovereign good pleasure. He had looked upon her of his own pleasure Mary realized. No false humility, she says, she was of “low estate.” A sincere statement of her conviction engraved upon her heart by the Lord God. And so she celebrates God’s work alone. And she sees that the world is not turned and spun by the blind impulse of chance but the things that we see in the world, the ups and downs of the history of which we are a part, are occasioned by the providence of God. She reflects over the past and she doesn’t talk about ancient history as if the great men who played parts in ancient history in the secular and political world were important for the things that had happened to her. She looks behind those things and she ascribes to the providence and judgment of God the things that transpire in this world. She doesn’t say what profane men often say that the turn of fortune led to this, and chance led to this. But rather, with Mary, everything is ultimately in the hands of the sovereign God, and the sovereign God out of his great mercy has blessed her by making her the mother of our Lord. And so she can say “from this time of, all generations shall count me blessed.”

And I’m sure of one thing too, that if Mary had lived in the days of the Johnny Carsons and the Nightline and Meet the Press, and all of the other things, you would never have found her as a guest. It’s quite obvious that so far as this great event of the incarnation which we celebrate as Christians as believing Christians, so far as that great event is concerned, it filled Mary with humility and thanksgiving and praise and not specifically of the greatness that would come to her but with thanksgiving, praise worshipful praise, rapturous praise, of the Lord God who was God her Savior. I can not think of any greater model for Christian believers in this season of the year then to reflect upon the even greater reasons we have for humility and thanksgiving and praise for our great sovereign God who has saved not only Mary and used her for his glory, but wonder of wonders, he saved me too. May God help us to reflect in that way at this time of the year.

If you’re here today and you’ve never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have no grounds for thanksgiving, no grounds for praise of God my Savior. And so we invite you as the word of God invites you, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. May God speak to your heart in such a way that you reflect upon your condition and you see that you too are lost. You reside under divine guilt, condemnation, you have offended a Holy God, you have nothing with which to present him, you can not possibly answer his command, “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul,” past present and future. You are lost and under divine condemnation. But to such sinners God offers eternal life through Jesus Christ. Come to him, believe in him and rejoice in him as the Savior of sinners as Mary did. And what better season to come to Christ then this season? So we invite you to believe in him, trust him, and receive the forgiveness of sins. Let’s stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for this marvelous song that Thou didst give to Mary and as we reflect upon her praise of the might of our great God, the mercy

of our great God and the holiness of our great God, we express to Thee Lord our thanksgiving. Thou has done marvelous things for us also. And we worship Thy name. We praise Thee that the covenantal promises made to Abraham are finding their fulfillment and gathering in countless scores and hundreds and multitudes of the people of God. Lord help us in this season of the year to adequately give testimony to the grace that has come to us. Give us something of Mary’s humility ...

**[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]**