PROJECTIONIST
December 23, 2012 **“CHRISTMAS HUMILITY” Luke 1:26-55**

**LAST SUNDAY
Q.** Casting a Christmas Pageant with adult actors: looking for the Joseph. **JOSEPH’S SORT OF FAITH**

**THIS SUNDAY**

**Q.** Casting a Christmas Pageant, or a movie, with adult actors: looking for the Mary?

We have some biblical text to work with.

**Luke 1:26-38** ESV

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”

But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.”

And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

What we can see from Mary’s response to the angel: **Mary was, in essence, humble**. (A woman of faith)
The biblical word means “*lowly-minded*.” She wasn’t the sort of person that looked down on people.
That was because she WAS the sort of woman that looked up to God, and saw him clearly. That point of view changes how a person looks at everyone and everything else!
**N.B.** She might not have been humble!
\* She was engaged.
\* Her fiancée was a direct descendant of King David!
\* She was *just then* “entertaining” an angel! And not “unawares” either! **(Hebrews 13:2)**
\* The angel was very complimentary: *“O favoured one, the Lord is with you… you have found favor with God”*And the angel spoke of how great a son was to be born to her.

Humble with a very specific sort of humility

**Mary’s Sort of Humility**As revealed in her psalm of praise.

**Luke 1:46** ESV (*The Magnificat:* the title comes from the first big word she used.)
And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord…”

1. Authentic humility produces a clear view of God. It magnifies the Lord.

John Piper’s first Thanksgiving sermon at Bethlehem Baptist Church, November 1980: **I WILL MAGNIFY GOD WITH THANKSGIVING**…there are two kinds of magnifying: microscope magnifying and telescope magnifying. The one makes a small thing look bigger than it is. The other makes a big thing begin to look as big as it really is.

When David says, "I will magnify God with thanksgiving," he does not mean: "I will make a small God look bigger than he is. He means: "I will make a big God begin to look as big as he really is." … Christians are not called to be conmen who magnify their product out of all proportion to reality, when they know the competitor's product is far superior.

There is nothing and nobody superior to God. And so the calling of those who love God is to make his greatness begin to look as great as it really is. The whole duty of the Christian can be summed up in this: feel, think, and act in a way that will make God look as great as he really is. Be a telescope for the world of the infinite starry wealth of the glory of God. Mary was becoming “a telescope.”

START AGAIN… **Luke 1:46-49** ESV
And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me **blessed**; for he who is mighty has done **great things for me**, and holy is his name.

1. Authentic humility produces a clear view of ourselves.

Mary could see that **she needed a Saviour**. Everyone does. Even Mary.
 *In space and time*: she was a young woman. Pregnant woman. Roman-occupation. Vulnerable!
 *In eternity:* destined to stand before God and give account of herself, like every other human being.
She could see that **her “estate was humble.”** “humiliation” (The details of her life were lowly. Unimpressive.)
She could see that she was being “**blessed.“** (No bragging rights. Blessing!)

She could see that **God is holy and mighty.** So knew that she, by comparison, was not. A clear view of God.

3. Authentic humility produces a clear view of the contrast between pride and humility

READING ON…

**Luke 1:50-55** ESV
And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

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

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

**ON THE ONE HAND:**

- The proud are scattered in the thoughts of their hearts. The proud are confused.
And the proud will remain confused. About many things, including this contrast.
And about what to make of “humility.”
- Therefore: the “mighty” will be brought down from “their thrones.” Q. Do you know what that’s like?
- The “rich” will be sent away empty. Q. Same question.
**BY CONTRAST:**
+ God’s mercy is for those who fear him (Pr.9:10) and he shows strength to them.
+ God exalts those of humble estate. (I Peter 5:5)
+ God fills the hungry with good things.
+ God helps his servant in remembrance of his mercy.

WE WILL ALWAYS MISUNDERSTAND THIS CONTRAST IF WE DON’T UNDERSTAND WHAT PRODUCES THIS CONTRAST

1. Authentic humility is a product of authentic faith.

- Part of the mercy of God towards those who fear him is the gift of faith.
- Part of the strength he shows to those who fear him is the strength to believe: the strength to trust and so obey.
- Part of the help he provides in remembrance of his mercy is help with our faith. *“I do believe. Help my unbelief”* (Mark 9:24)

IT’S ALL PART OF THIS CONTRAST AND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GOD AND US. **JOSEPH’S SORT OF FAITH**

 Authentic faith in God connects us to Christ.

1. Authentic humility produces authentic joy.

 **Luke 1:46-47** ESV
And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior

MARY’S JOY IS NOT INCIDENTAL TO HER FAITH IN GOD AND HER HUMILITY. HER JOY WAS THE RESULT.

**Psalm 16:1,2, 8-11** ESV

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
I say to the LORD, “**You are my Lord;** **I have no good apart from you**.” (Humility)

I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

**Therefore my heart is glad,** and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

You make known to me the path of life; **in your presence there is fullness of joy;**

at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

One good thing about Christmas as an annual event is that annually we have the opportunity to consider what a great great man Christ is (Col. 1:15; Heb.1:3), and to be humbled by what we see.