

Advent

“Upside Down”

Week 4: God’s Fulfillment, Love Personified

Introduction: Christmas is close at hand. This fourth week of Advent we are reminded of God’s incredible *love* and of God’s faithfulness in *fulfilling* his promises. Our scripture this week is a window into the heart of Mary as she reflects on God’s faithfulness. May you be stirred to worship just as she was.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, open our minds as we turn to your word. We long to know you, we long to hear you. Search our hearts and examine our thoughts. We pray this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior and by the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

First time through...consider the following questions as the scripture is read aloud:

1. What words or phrases from this passage catch your attention? (write them down/underline them).
2. How would you describe the nature of this passage traditionally known as Mary’s Song?

Read Luke 1:46-55 and Discuss

Reading: Luke 1:46-55 (NIV)

46 And Mary said:

“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.”

Second time through...consider the following questions as the scripture is read aloud a second time:

1. What does this passage tell us about the character of God?
2. Where do you see evidence of God's upside down kingdom here? In other words, how is God's kingdom upside down from the kingdoms of this world?

Read Luke 1:39-55 and Discuss

Third time through...consider the following questions as the scripture is read aloud a third and final time.

1. What does this passage say about Jesus? What does it say about the people of God, myself included?
2. In what way is love exhibited in this passage? Explain.

Read Luke 1:39-55 and Discuss

Reflection: Mary knew the scriptures. She knew the story of God's faithful pursuit and care of the Israelite people. Her obedience and courage is to be admired. Like Mary, our anticipation of the return of Jesus is founded in truth. We trust God, we rest in Jesus because we know who God is through his scriptures and as we reflect on God's presence in our lives.

Suggested Prayer “God of grace, your eternal Word took flesh among us when Mary placed her life at the service of your will. Prepare our hearts for his coming again; keep us steadfast in hope and faithful in service, that we may receive the coming of his kingdom, for the sake of Jesus Christ the ruler of all who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”- *Book of Common Worship*, 177.

