

LifeGroup Study
THE MAGNIFICAT: Overcoming What's Overwhelming
2021-12-05
Participant Notes

OVERVIEW: Welcome to our LifeGroup Christmas study, The Magnificat. The Magnificat is Mary's prayer/poem/hymn of praise found in Luke 1:46-55. It is her praise to God for the angel's announcement of the upcoming birth of Jesus, the Messiah. For this week we'll focus in on the first part of Mary's words – "My soul glorifies/magnifies the Lord."

The announcement from Gabriel that Mary was chosen to give birth to the Son of God and Mary's willingness to be used of God in this way gave birth to a number of challenges in her life. The elation of being chosen by God, the consequent doubts about her story from others, the accusations that would have been thrown at her as well as Simeon's later prophecy after the birth of Jesus that a sword would pierce her heart, meant that she experienced some overwhelming struggles as a result of being the mother of Jesus.

The opening section of The Magnificat shows us how Mary responded to those overwhelming experiences and how we too need to respond when life gets overwhelming for us.

ICEBREAKER: I Always Do *This* at Christmas. What tradition or experience or practice is something you always do at Christmas? Maybe for you it's a certain cookie you make or buy, or the way you decorate your tree, or a spiritual habit like reading about the birth of Jesus on your own or with others. Share a favourite Christmas tradition with your group.

STUDY:

1. On Sunday, Ken talked about how worship is a way for us to respond to the tough circumstances in our lives. **What was a highlight for you from Ken's teaching?**
2. READ: Luke 1:26-38

In this passage, the angel, Gabriel, brings Mary the news that she would be the mother of Jesus, the Messiah.

- **What do you notice about Mary's response in vs. 38?**

3. READ: Luke 1:39-45

In this section we read Elizabeth's joyful response to Mary's visit. ***"God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honoured that the mother of my Lord should visit me?"*** vs. 43. NLT

- **What does Elizabeth's response to Mary suggest might be an approach we might take with helping believers who are overwhelmed with their circumstances?**

4. READ: Luke 1:46-49

Mary's Song of Praise: The Magnificat

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

- Mary's praises to God can help us cultivate a heart of praise to Him. **What are some key words or phrases Mary uses in these verses to magnify God?**

5. **How does the Magnificat help you see what worship might look like for you?**

6. Ken gave a definition of worship in his teaching that went like this . . . TRUE WORSHIP HAPPENS WHEN GOD EXPERIENCES US GLORIFYING HIM.

- TRUE WORSHIP . . . If there is true worship then there is also false worship.
- **Can you name some ways we engage in false worship? Define false worship?**
- **Why is worship such a normal part of the life of a human?**

- HAPPENS . . . worship is a verb. Worship is more than gathering on Sundays and actively singing to God.
- **Where else does worship show up?**
- **Why is it important for us to think of it as a verb?**

- WHEN GOD EXPERIENCES US . . . It is easy for worship to be about us. But God is the audience. Ken mentioned that there is an “echo” that happens in worship whereby we the worshipper experiences strength and alignment and joy in the act of worship. But this must not be our primary motivation in worship. **Why not?**

- GLORIFYING HIM. . . . This is the point. When we glorify God we are proclaiming accurately who he is and what he has done. He is the ultimate one. We were made to glorify God. All creation was made for that purpose.
- **What is a key takeaway for you from today’s study?**

EXPERIENCE GOD

Watch or Listen to “Magnificat: A Virgin Mary Hymn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvRcGnMX3jU>

Allow this song/video to speak to your heart as you magnify God this Christmas.

PRAYER

This week, let’s pray for the upcoming Christmas season at Creekside.

- Pray for the Christmas Eve services, that God would use these services to draw many people to Him, to point people to Jesus.
- Ask for God’s blessing and provision for all those involved in the services (tech, worship, teaching, etc). Ask that God would be glorified through our teams this Christmas.
- Pray that God would draw seekers to check out our services this Christmas. Ask for boldness for Creekside people to invite friends and family who are seekers.