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Luke 1:26-55

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# THE MAGNIFICAT: THE REFRAIN OF THE REVOLUTION

Advent is the season of music. Music has incredible power to awaken dull minds, stir the emotions, and activate the wills with tremendous force. Consider the stirring sound of a lone trumpet playing taps, the bagpiper's penetrating notes of "Amazing Grace" at a funeral, or the heart-stopping beat of a marching band's massive drum roll at a football game. Music also has a way of recreating memories. With just a few well-played chords, in a flash, music can transport us back in time. Music can also be revolutionary and divine, invading secular minds, breaking down hard hearts, and touching individuals with a dimension of what is holy. Music can be a signal that there is another world around us, heavenly realities that lift us to lofty heights of love, sacrifice, and worship.

For the last few weeks we have focused on the remarkable story of Hannah, in 1 Samuel. After four centuries of spiritual darkness and moral decadence that had left the social fabric of Israel torn to shreds, Israel had become a nation in desperate need of change. The surprising instrument of change was Hannah, whose barrenness was symbolic of the nation's spiritual state. In desperation, Hannah poured out her pain to God in prayer, asking him to remember her in her affliction with the gift of a son. Prayer became the channel of God's grace, opening the door to the future for both Hannah and Israel. When God remembered her and granted her a son, the reality of his grace was so overwhelming that she became committed to live for the sole purpose of the kingdom of God. Her heart overflowing with gratitude, she returned the gift of her son back to the Lord, and Samuel became Israel's first prophet and kingmaker. The consummate expression of Hannah's joy is articulated in a song of full-throated praise. In 17 poetic lines, Hannah glories in God's holiness, which manifests itself on the earth through radical, revolutionary reversals, bringing down the arrogant and powerful, while simultaneously raising up the poor and humble to take their place.

The trajectory of Hannah's praise extends well beyond her womb. It extends down the corridors of history, giving us a lens to see that all future advancements of God's rule on earth will be marked by similar social upheavals, as God turns the world on its head. Hannah's praise doesn't merely sing about "revolution," it ignites it! For her closing lines end not with praise, but with petition, beseeching God to strengthen his future king and exalt his horn, just as he did Hannah's. In my recent correspondence with Jan Fokkelman, he notes that most translations miss the jussive form (expressing a "wish") of the verb "exalt," and that it should govern the unmarked jussive ("give") in the previous line. This would transform Hannah's final words from an indicative (he will give... he will exalt) into a prayer:

*May he give strength to his king,  
and may he exalt the horn of his anointed.* (1 Sam 2:10b)

Hannah's closing petition makes her song more revolutionary than we could have imagined. As Fokkelman observes, "Hannah's composition starts with the fact and the property of her own horn: it IS high (and she is grateful and happy). The situation of the king's horn, however, is quite different: it is not high by itself, it (and he) needs Hannah's prayer (and God's positive reaction to it!) before he gets power." Here is a woman who previously had no social status in Israel. Maligned and marginalized in her own home, she now becomes God's chosen instrument to bring his kingdom to earth in more than one era. In her day, her prayer moved the sovereign Lord to inaugurate his promises to the patriarchs to give Israel a dynasty of kings (Gen 17:6, 16; 35:11; 49:10), and her womb became the channel to birth the holy prophet, who would be Israel's first kingmaker. In the next generation, when David was established as king of Israel, God strengthened his commitment to fulfill

Hannah's petition by making an eternal covenant with the house of David to establish an everlasting kingdom through David's sons (2 Sam 7:11-17).

After David's reign, Israel's story turned tragic. The majority of the nation's kings turned to the false strength of political and military power to establish their kingdoms, rather than trusting God through humility, trust, and prayer. But throughout this time, God maintained his witness through his prophets, who remained faithful to his covenants and represented true strength. "Though the prophets have only words in their mouths, not swords in their hands, *I AM* maintains his rule through his spiritually energized-by-faith friends and Israel's conscience."<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, Israel stopped listening to their conscience. After centuries of getting a "busy signal" from his people, God hung up the phone and left the building. For four hundred years, God's people were shut up in a tomb of silence (1 Sam 2:9). After a millennium of failure, seventy years of exile, and oppressive servitude under foreign domination, with no new prophet or king in sight, Israel had become, just as in the days of Judges, a nation in desperate need of change. But the merciful and faithful God did not forget Hannah's petition that had once ignited his promises to the patriarchs. Just as 1 Samuel opens with the story of God inaugurating new beginnings through a barren woman (after 400 years of spiritual compromise), so Luke's gospel opens with stories of a miraculous birth, following 400 years of silence. Luke is not introducing a new story, but continuing and advancing the story of God's work of saving the world to its climactic fulfillment in the person of Jesus.

As the climax to Israel's story, Luke gives us the account of not one but two miraculous births of sons to women who are childless. The first records the birth of John to Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah, and the second, the birth of Jesus to Elizabeth's relative, Mary. That God is taking his revolution to new levels is further highlighted by the fact that these two births are climaxed with not one but four songs of praise.

The first is Mary's song, known as the *Magnificat*, from the opening word of the Latin version: *Magnificat, anima meum Dominum*: "My soul *magnifies* the Lord" (Luke 1:46). The second song is sung by John's father, Zechariah. It is known as *Benedictus*, also taken from the first word of the Latin translation, *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*: "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel" (Luke 1:68). The third song comes from the angels in heaven, who proclaim Jesus' birth to the shepherds, singing, "Glory to God in the highest," or in Latin, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* (Luke 2:14). The fourth and final song is *Nunc Dimittis* meaning, "dismiss now." It was sung by Simeon, a devout Israelite who was eagerly waiting for the consolation of Israel. Simeon was given the promise by God that before his death, he would see the Messiah. When Joseph and Mary brought the newborn Jesus into the temple, Simeon declared, "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss (*nunc dimittis*) your servant in peace" (Luke 2:29). All of these songs celebrate the subversive power of the omnipotent God, who is bringing about a revolution on earth that will turn the social world upside down.

This morning we will examine the angel's announcement to Mary (1:26-38), followed by her visit to her relative, Elizabeth (1:39-45), and conclude with Mary's response to Elizabeth's greeting and blessing, the *Magnificat* (1:46-55).

## I. The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38)

### A. Gabriel's announcement to Mary (1:26-33)

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." (1:26-28 NASB)

The first hint that revolution is in the air is the presence of the archangel Gabriel, who stands before God in his court. From the book of Daniel, we know that Gabriel is an eschatological messenger sent from God to help the prophet interpret visions regarding the last days (Dan 8:16; 9:21). Now after centuries, God has again sent Gabriel from heaven to announce two miraculous births. Earlier in Luke, Gabriel had been sent to the spiritual center of Israel, the Holy Place at the temple, to announce John's birth to the officiating priest, Zechariah. The scene is filled with several echoes from the birth of Samuel, Israel's first prophet. But unlike Hannah, Zechariah is slow to believe in God's promise. Rather than rejoicing in thanksgiving and song, Zechariah is struck dumb, symbolic of the nation's spiritual insensitivity. Despite his hardness of heart, Elizabeth received the ability to conceive, and by the grace of God her status was restored among God's people. In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent Gabriel back to earth for a second birth announcement, "to Mary, far away from the temple mount in Jerusalem, to Nazareth in Galilee – insignificant, despised, unclean."<sup>3</sup>

These two women represent two generations in Israel, the old and the new. Elizabeth is old, beyond childbearing years. Though she was a daughter of Aaron, being barren, she suffered disgrace. She typifies Israel's estrangement from God, and disgrace from being oppressed by tyrannical foreigners. Mary represents the new Israel. She is young, most likely twelve to thirteen years of age, and is introduced "as if she were an orphan with no family background provided; she is betrothed to Joseph, but as such has not yet entered into his house or inherited his status. Yet, she is favored by God, through for no apparent reason other than God's gracious choice."<sup>4</sup> In this revolution, the main players are the little people, who by the world's standards have either lost their status or never had any status to rely on. As in Hannah's story, status is redefined and restored by one's faith. In Luke, these "little people" become the heroic models of faith and trust. Three times we are told that Mary is a virgin. When offered the choice to cooperate with God's saving activity, she must by faith count the cost of suffering shame for becoming pregnant prior to marriage, and face the possibility of losing her status in Joseph's household. Will she do it?

The angel greets Mary with the words, "Rejoice, favored one, the Lord is with you!" Joy is to fill Mary's heart because she is the recipient of God's undeserved grace. Such favor raises her status to that of the greatest leaders in Israel. The phrase, "I will be with you," conveys much more significance than a generic promise of God's traveling presence. These words were most often addressed to Israel's leaders when they were called to a task of insurmountable odds, like the Exodus, "or when setting out on an undertaking that seems very likely to fail."<sup>5</sup> This was God's pre-game speech to Moses before he sent him off to Egypt to confront Pharaoh. So now he gives the same speech to twelve-year-old Mary. If she will respond in faith, the omnipotent God will be with her to protect, encourage, and strengthen her until the task for which she has been called is completed. Called by grace with results that are guaranteed: now that is a cause for joy. But that is only half of it.

**But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 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 name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." (1:29-33)**

To a bewildered Mary, Gabriel explains that she will be the mother of Israel's long expected king, God's very own Son ("the Son of the Most High"), who will be given "the throne of his father David, and he will reign over

the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." Gabriel's words echo the language of other birth announcements, especially the one given to Sarah (Gen 16:11), coupled with Daniel's description of the exaltation of "one like a son of man" (Dan 7:13-14). Taken together, one cannot help but be overwhelmed that this is the climactic moment of history, the restoration of Israel and the salvation of the world.

### B. Gabriel's further explanation (1:34-37)

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God." (1:34-37)

With the complexity of expectations whirling in her head, Mary asks, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" Unlike Zechariah's unbelief that seeks for a sign (1:18), Mary's question seeks an explanation to understand the supernatural way that the process will unfold. Gabriel's answer reveals that though Mary indeed will play a role as an obedient recipient of grace, the miracle will be all God's doing.

Green points out that "the first two clauses of Gabriel's response parallel one another and prepare for the third:

The Holy Spirit	will come upon you, and
the power of the Most High	will overshadow you;
consequently, the child to be born	will be called holy,
	the Son of God." <sup>6</sup>

These two lines bring together God's omnipotent power, manifest in his Spirit, with his absolute holiness. In the book of Judges, leaders had Spirit without character, which led to disaster. With the coming of Christ and the pouring out of his Spirit at Pentecost, leaders are to demonstrate the power of the Spirit in their lives by means of their holy character.

Gabriel concludes with a reminder to Mary of God's omnipotent power. Those words ignite her memory of the Lord's statement to Sarah in Gen 18:4 (LXX): "Is anything impossible with God?" With that final word, Mary's faith leaps over the wall.

### C. Mary's surrender (1:38)

**And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (1:38)**

The personal and social cost to Mary in making such a commitment is difficult to comprehend, but as Green comments, her faith is revolutionary and becomes a model for all Israel:

Mary's response to the divine announcement contrasts sharply with that of Zechariah's, with the result that she, surprisingly in scenes of this type, has the last word. She unreservedly embraces the purpose of God, without regard to its cost to her personally... In describing herself as the Lord's servant, she acknowledges her submission to God's purpose, but also her role in assisting that purpose. Moreover, she claims a place in God's household, so to speak; indeed, in this socio-historical context, her words relativize and actually place in jeopardy her status in Joseph's household. For her, partnership in the purpose of God transcends the claims of family.<sup>7</sup>

The result of all this is that Mary, who in that world was at the bottom of the social scale in terms of age, family, heritage, gender, and so on, turns out to be the one favored and exalted by God. In this revolutionary kingdom, one's status is defined by one's obedience to God and the privilege of being used for his saving purposes. This theme is reinforced in Luke's description of Mary's journey to see her Aunt Elizabeth.

## II. Mary's Journey to Visit Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45)

**Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Eliza-**

beth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And how has it *happened* to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." (1:39-45)

Having been touched by an angel, Mary breaks with all social conventions to journey by herself some seventy miles to the hill country around Jerusalem to be with her aunt. As a young girl, Mary would have never been allowed to venture outside the home without accompaniment even in her own town, let alone travel clear across the country. She must have taken God's promise seriously that "the Lord would be with you!" You will remember how Hannah was a woman to be reckoned with. She stood on her own two feet. Mary is a woman who runs on her own two feet!

In spite of her at-risk adventure, Elizabeth responds to Mary's greeting with enthusiastic joy. The larger realities that are developing in their respective wombs transcend social and cultural norms. Three times, Luke mentions Mary's greeting and the impact it has upon Elizabeth and the unborn John. Upon hearing Mary's voice, the Spirit completely takes over and overwhelms everyone with joy, including the unborn John. In Mary's voice, John recognizes his Lord to come, and though he cannot speak, he manages to leap. Elizabeth is instantly filled with the Spirit. She gives the divine interpretation of all that had occurred, and blesses Mary for her obedience.

How revolutionary is all this? There is something remarkably new here. In previous annunciation scenes, when the announcement of a child was made to a barren woman, there was always the painful presence of jealousy between two rival women: Sarah and Hagar, Rachel and Leah, and finally, Hannah and Penninah. But now, with the announcement of the coming of Christ and the Messianic age, we notice no competition between the mothers, but instead mutual respect and a deep affection for one another. Each woman rejoices in the grace given to the other, for in God's kingdom there is no need for competition; we all uniquely complement one another with different gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:4-7). On some occasions, the older and more experienced individual steps aside to bless the younger and less experienced as having a greater role to play, finding greatest joy in a supporting role. This will exemplify John's relationship with Jesus, who said of John, "among those born of women there is no one greater than John." John, the last prophet in Israel, came to anoint Israel's final King. His word was so powerful that "all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem" (Mark 1:5). But from John's point of view, his sole purpose was to prepare the way of the One who was coming, who was greater than he was. John's motto was, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). This is the authentic mark of God's people in the age of the Spirit.

It is significant too that Mary's response to Elizabeth's praise is to graciously step aside, diverting it all upward to God in jubilant song.

### III. The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

"My soul exalts the Lord

<sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>for He has had regard for the humble state of his bondslave;

for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed,

<sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup>And his mercy (loyal-love) is upon generation after generation toward those who fear him.

<sup>51</sup>He has done mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in the thoughts of their heart.

<sup>52</sup>He has brought down rulers from their thrones and has exalted those who were humble.

<sup>53</sup>He has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty-handed.

<sup>54</sup>He has given help to Israel his servant, in remembrance of his mercy (loyal-love),

<sup>55</sup>Just as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever." (1:46-55)

Mary has drawn every line of her song from the OT (mainly from Hannah's song and the Psalms), applying them with new significance in her own life. Like Hannah's song, Mary's praise identifies, invites, and ignites God's revolution that is turning the world upside down. I read it as having two stanzas (46-50; 51-55), each made up of two smaller divisions (strophes).

In the first stanza, Mary articulates her praise (46-47), and the reasons for her praise (48-50); in the second stanza, she further details the reasons for her praise (51-53), and applies her praise to Israel (54-55).

In verses 46-47 (drawn from 1 Sam 2:1-2; Hab 3:18), Mary bursts into wholehearted praise because of her personal encounter with the Lord, who took note of her lowly estate and chose her to be the one to birth the Savior into the world. Mary is consumed with joy as she realizes that the eschatological coming of God is at hand. Zephaniah's call to the daughter of Zion to shout with a ringing cry of exultant joy, now lands on Mary's lips:

Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion!

Shout *in triumph*, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all *your* heart,

O daughter of Jerusalem!

The LORD has taken away *His* judgments against you,

He has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;

You will fear disaster no more.

In that day

it will be said to Jerusalem:

"Do not be afraid, O Zion;

Do not let your hands fall limp.

The LORD your God is in your midst,

A victorious warrior.

He will exult over you with joy,

He will be quiet in His love,

He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. (Zeph 3:14-17)

Drawing upon her memory of Hannah's prayer, "if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me" (1 Sam 1:11), Mary is overwhelmed that God is doing for her what he did for Hannah. Yet in Mary's case, the gift came without Hannah's pain, or her petition or vow. Mary is chosen to be part of God's revolution for seemingly no reason except that the Lord had regard for her lowly, humble estate. This is what motivated her to turn her life completely over to God's saving purposes.

From Mary's point of view, being a bonds slave in God's household is the most exalted position in life, for she knows that what God has done for her will be lauded by every generation. The virgin birth will be catalogued in the list of "Great Things" that Israel celebrated in their liturgy (Pss 71:16, 19; 77:11) to remind themselves of the many acts of salvation God had done on their behalf. But for centuries these songs had lost their power, becoming rote rehearsals of vague memories from the forgotten past. But Gabriel's words to Mary ignited the impossible, therefore she celebrates that "the Mighty One" (i.e. "the One who can do anything") has indeed come and is doing amazing wonders once again.

The exaltation of the lowly is Mary's understanding of how God supremely manifests his holiness on earth. And she leaves the door wide open, reminding us that this amazing grace is available to any who humble themselves to fear the Lord (Ps 103:17, Jas 1:9; 4:6,10; 4:10; 1 Pet 5:6,7).

In the second stanza (made up of two strophes (51-53; 54-55), Mary projects from the great things God has done in her womb to the "great things" he has done for Israel and the world. As in Hannah's song, it is the story of awesome reversals that turn the pecking order of Israel's social world on its head.

The opening line resonates with striking allusions to Israel's Exodus, when the Lord became Israel's "Mighty Warrior," bared his holy "arm" and "scattered" his enemies to redeem his people with "great" judgments (Exod 6:6; 15:16; Ps 68:1, 14; 89:10). Mary is announcing that the New Exodus which the prophets had promised and for which Israel had longed was now here. This is a decisive moment in history, when there is going to be a radical shift in the existing powers structures. God is exercising his *omnipotent* power, pulling down all other *potentates* and placing the humble in their place. The proud who grasp for positions of honor will be scattered, brought down, and sent away empty handed.

After the Emperor Augustus (63 B.C. – 14 C.E.) expanded his empire and brought unity and peace to most of the known world, he acquired the titles, "Son of God," "Imperator of Land and Sea," the "Benefactor and Savior of the Whole World." In an effort to increase the tax base for the Roman treasury, Augustus exercised his sovereignty by decreeing a registration of "all the world." In reality, he was merely acting as God's puppet. His decree became the vehicle to get a young couple from Nazareth to Bethlehem in order to fulfill Micah's prophecy that the lowly city of Bethlehem would be "exalted" as the birthplace of the new King:

**But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
Too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.  
His goings forth are from long ago,  
From the days of eternity. (Micah 5:2)**

When the angels announce the birth of the Messiah, the announcement is not made to the heads of the state, but to lowly shepherds who were poor and regarded as outsiders and unclean. They were close to the bottom of the social scale in that world. With the birth of Jesus, the powerful are already being brought down, while the lowly are being lifted up as God subverts the existing social order that perpetuates such distinctions.

Once the humble are lifted up they are "filled with good things" — which means the life that God gives is more satisfying than physical food. As Jesus testified to the disciples when they offered him food after his interaction with the Samaritan woman: "I have food to eat that you do not know about."... "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work" (John 4:32, 34). The task of exalting those who are outcasts, poor in spirit, and humble is the most fulfilling and rewarding work on earth. It sustains us beyond what we are humanly capable of.

Mary concludes her song with the final words of Micah's prophecy, which seals the source of her joy in God's covenantal love:

**You will give truth to Jacob  
And unchanging love to Abraham,  
Which You swore to our forefathers  
From the days of old. (Micah 7:20)**

Just as Hannah asked God to "remember" her, so Mary realizes on a grand scale that her pregnancy is rooted in God's covenantal faithfulness to "remember" his promises to the patriarchs. All of God's promises in the Old Testament are now reaching their fulfillment in the conception of the seed inside Mary. And the driving force behind it is God's loyal-love. Centuries may come and go, but God never ever forgets.

#### IV. Mary's Response: A Model of Faith

My colleague, Bernard Bell, observes that the early church so valued the Magnificat that it "was incorporated into the liturgy of the church at a very early date. In many liturgical traditions it is sung every day. For example in the Anglican Church it is sung every day during Evening Prayer."<sup>8</sup> He further considers how beneficial it would be to our spirituality if we sang it every day for thirty or forty years.

As I reflect on Mary's response to the angel and then to Elizabeth's praise, I am struck by two things: first, the absolute trust and total abandonment of

Mary's obedience; and second, the fact that we as a congregation are rich. If the rich are the ones sent away empty handed, how is it that we who are rich can hope to respond like Mary?

I am reminded of Jesus' response to the rich man who came to him seeking eternal life:

**Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Mark 10:21)**

The demand is much too much for this man to consider, and he walks away grieved in spirit. As a cloud of sadness fills the air, Jesus turns to his disciples and says this man was not an isolated case, but represents all who are wealthy:

**Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! (23-24)**

This statement shocked the disciples. Most Jews assumed from the teaching of Deuteronomy and some of the Psalms that wealth was a symbol of God's blessing, and if anyone had a share in the age to come it had to be the rich. Then Jesus draws them into the imaginative world of impossibility:

**"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (25)**

A camel — whose height, awkward gait and heavy burdens gives cause for a humorous display as the beast attempts to negotiate the narrow openings around Jerusalem! Now by means of hyperbole, Jesus asks his disciples to imagine that same camel passing through the eye of a needle. What is impossible for the camel is even more than impossible for the rich:

**They were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?" Looking at them, Jesus said, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." (26-27)**

Jesus leads his disciples to the cliff of impossibilities and then echoes the words of Gabriel to Mary, "With God all things are possible." God can take rich, self-assured individuals and cause them to have the faith to forsake property, family, and all worldly status to follow Jesus. God had already worked that very miracle on their hearts. Peter and Andrew left their fishing nets to follow Jesus; James and John left their father and the family business; Matthew left his profitable tax collector's booth. And similarly, I see signs of this quiet revolution being conceived in many of us, not in pomp and circumstance, but in the humble confession of our needy and lowly estate, and the resulting excitement of playing a part in the exaltation of the humble in Cupertino and around the world. It is a wondrous revolution to be part of, and one that keeps us singing,

**"The Lord is our midst, a Victorious Warrior,  
The Mighty One has done great things for us,  
holy is his name."**

1 I owe special thanks to Jan Fokkelman for his helpful comments regarding my earlier message on Hannah's poem.

2 Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology, an Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 702.

3 Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 84.

4 Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 62.

5 Donald E. Gowen, *Theology in Exodus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 65.

6 Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 90.

7 Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 92.

8 Bernard Bell, "Tell Out My Soul (Luke 1:26-55)." Dec. 12, 2004, Catalog no. 7217. Online: <http://www.pbcc.org/sermons/bell/7217.html>.