



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK 3

We are in the season of Advent. In the four weeks leading up to Christmas, we take time to mark the growing anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ. The word Advent means just that—"coming or arrival." This week we listened to Mary's song that she shared in response to God's work of salvation. May your life make God appear even bigger to a world in great need. May you proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the poor. And may the Holy Spirit of God encourage you to sing a song of salvation.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

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## DAILY STUDY

### MONDAY: LUKE 1.46-56 (ESV)

<sup>46</sup> *And Mary said,*

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,*

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

<sup>48</sup> *for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.*

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

<sup>49</sup> *for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.*

<sup>50</sup> *And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.*

<sup>51</sup> *He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;*

<sup>52</sup> *he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;*

<sup>53</sup> *he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

<sup>54</sup> *He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
<sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”*

<sup>56</sup> *And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.*

- This song from Mary was based on a similar prayer from Hannah in [1 Samuel 2](#) upon the arrival of her son Samuel. We call Mary’s words the *magnificat* because of the first word in the Latin translation of the text. It is about exaltation and the glorification of God’s name. The song represents an awareness of God’s great reversal of power structures. It is filled with hope for the poor and lowly. As those who know the rest of the story, we can see the significance of an average teenage girl in the small town of Nazareth singing this song. God comes to us no matter where we are and no matter what our position in society is. **What “song” are you singing that makes God appear bigger?**
- *God, I raise up a song of praise to you today. May every word I speak and action I make bring you glory! Amen.*

## **TUESDAY: EXODUS 15.20-21**

*Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron’s sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. <sup>21</sup> Miriam sang to them:*

*“Sing to the LORD,  
for he is highly exalted.  
Both horse and driver  
he has hurled into the sea.”*

- This is Miriam’s song in response to God saving His people by parting the Red Sea and then swallowing Pharaoh’s army. Mary would have known this song too. She joined a long line of women who responded to God’s salvation by offering a song of praise. What stands out about Miriam’s song is that it’s very specific. Every time it was sung it made the event it remembered seem like it happened yesterday. **What specific thing has God done for you recently?**
- *God, you are highly exalted. And I list before you the things that you have done for me....Amen.*

## **WEDNESDAY: JUDGES 5.1-5**

*On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song:*

<sup>2</sup> *“When the princes in Israel take the lead,  
when the people willingly offer themselves—  
praise the LORD!*

<sup>3</sup> *“Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers!  
I, even I, will sing to the LORD;  
I will praise the LORD, the God of Israel, in song.*

<sup>4</sup> *“When you, LORD, went out from Seir,  
when you marched from the land of Edom,  
the earth shook, the heavens poured,*

*the clouds poured down water.*

<sup>5</sup> *The mountains quaked before the LORD, the One of Sinai,  
before the LORD, the God of Israel.*

- Deborah was a prophet who led (or served as judge over) Israel. People came to her to settle disputes. She was given a position of power and prestige. This song she sang was in response to God's victory over Israel's enemies. She used her position to point to God. This was not a common use of power in her time, nor is it in ours. **What position of influence are you in? How will you use that position to praise God?**
- *God, you came as a lowly baby born in a cattle stall. Yet your Son Jesus reigns over all the earth. His life points me to you. May my life point others to you as well. Amen.*

#### **THURSDAY: LUKE 4.17-21 (NIV)**

*He stood up to read,<sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:*

<sup>18</sup> *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,*

<sup>19</sup> *to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

<sup>20</sup> *Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.<sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

- At the start of his ministry years, Jesus read these words from Isaiah and proclaimed that they were fulfilled in him. He announced that his purpose was to offer good news to the poor. Mary was right when she sang a song of exalting the humble and filling the hungry with good things. It's also the song that followers of Jesus are meant to sing. **In what ways does the church sing this song of good news to the poor? In what ways do Christians sometimes neglect this purpose?**
- *Jesus Christ, you are the Son of God and that is good news to all of us who are poor and in need of your grace. Have mercy on us when we forget that your gospel is for the poor. Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: 2 PETER 3.12-13**

*...as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.<sup>13</sup> But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.*

- One person's good news is another person's worst day. Those who find their contentment in possessions and worldly wealth find language of a new heaven and a new earth to be threatening and unfair. But the poor find great hope in the promise of a fresh start. The new earth will be when the poor finally realize the home they were designed for. **What do these images from 2 Peter mean to you? Are they frightening? Hopeful?**

- *Almighty God, I look forward to you making all things new. Have mercy upon us and prepare us for righteousness in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

### **SATURDAY: ZEPHANIAH 3.17 (NLT)**

*For the Lord your God is living among you.*

*He is a mighty savior.*

*He will take delight in you with gladness.*

*With his love, he will calm all your fears.*

*He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.”*

- While reflecting on Mary’s song in Luke 1, Pastor Jacob shared this image from Zephaniah. God lives with us and is singing over us. The prophet included these words in the middle of another promise of judgment and restoration for God’s people, promising peace and their thriving. It causes God to sing and rejoice over them. It creates a beautiful chorus of our song to God and God’s song over us. **What are the areas in your own life that are ripe for restoration?**
- *God, I listen for your beautiful voice singing a song of rejoicing over me today. Amen.*

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Reread verses 50-53 from Luke 1.

*And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.*

<sup>51</sup> *He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;*

<sup>52</sup> *he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;*

<sup>53</sup> *he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

<sup>54</sup> *He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,*

<sup>55</sup> *as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”*

- Based on what you know about the generations before Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, who or what might Mary have had in mind when she sang the words in verses 50 and 51? To whom did God show strength? Who has received God’s mercy?
- “He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.” What would be the implications of these words today? Have you ever felt that the thoughts of your heart were scattered?
- How is God helping you to remember his mercy? (v 54)