

“Enchanted- Mother Mary”

Jared began with a discussion about how songs have a way of moving us. Songs like “Wonder Wall” take him back to his teenage years; songs like “If I Could Dream” look forward to a distant hopeful future. Worship songs can transport us to the space where heaven and earth connect and overlap. John Mark Hicks discussed that in grief, we can worship and join in with the voices of not just the angels, but our loved ones that now sing in Heaven. Jared shared this sentiment in connection with memories of his father’s voice, and the very present sound of his voice when he worships today. Hebrews 12:22-24 says this:

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

As we look at the “Magnificat”, the song of Mary, we are taken back to a young woman, a teenager challenged in a difficult culture with news that could have brought shame and vulnerability. Her response is one that would shake the foundations of the strongest. As we sing her song, listen for her voice. Luke 1:46-55:

And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.”

As one of those from the lower states in life, Mary is called “Blessed”. This is an announcement of a Kingdom turned right side up. The beatitudes come to mind. The humble, meek, and poor in spirit are lifted along with Mary. Mary is proclaiming God’s merciful intervention. He is scattering the proud and bringing down rulers, while sending the rich away empty. Everyone is on a level field now. In verses 54-55, we are reminded of God’s promise to Abraham, and his faithfulness to the covenant. Mary’s proclamation has weight to it, and threatens the power of all those like Herod. This is a revolutionary song, beyond Sam Cooke’s “A Change is Going to Come”, or Pete Seger’s “We Shall Overcome”. Beyond, but in the same direction. Did Mary really comprehend the full magnitude of her words? “Mary, Did You

Know?" is a remarkable song which captures the essence of our question. A small ensemble sang that song.

Jared next reminded us of Gabriel's words. Good News about God's mercy to his servant, Israel. His Kingdom will never end. Zechariah heard the good news, and despite being an old man with ample knowledge of God's work throughout scripture (especially with older couples having children), he questions "How **can** this be?". He is questioning the possibility. Mary, a teenager with much less experience of God, asks a different question: "How **will** this be?". Her question is not about possibility, but the process. She is given the answer. The Holy Spirit will be involved throughout. Luke 1:35-37:

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

We are reminded of Exodus 40 and the establishment of the Tabernacle. God's glory overshadowing the tent and filling the space. Luke fills his first chapter with the Holy Spirit, showing us the certainty of the interaction and confirmation of the Spirit throughout.

Mary's response is "Let it be". ***"I am the Lord's servant, may your WORD to me be fulfilled."*** This is an amazing response and reminds us both of the positive example of Isaiah, and the negative example of Jonah to the challenge of God. Luke amplifies that Mary was a willing participant in the Incarnation of Jesus. She is smuggling the King into a world that loves Caesar. 2000 years later, we sing her song of revolution and she takes us to a future hope we now have.

Jared then played "Ave Maria" ("Blessed Mary"). This song was played in a catholic funeral he attended. Jared sat in that funeral looking at a statue of Mary just a few feet from a crucifix. This expressionless, stoic statue of Mother Mary as she stood dressed in a white robe with a blue sash around her head started to come alive to him as he imagined what she must have felt at the foot of the Cross. Just like in the Magnificat, she surely didn't comprehend the magnitude. Nothing in Jewish literature or scripture was interpreted as pointing to a crucified Messiah until after the Resurrection. We have insight that Mary would not have possessed. Still, she would have remembered the words of Simeon in the Temple with her young boy. ***"A sword will pierce your own soul too."*** *Ave Maria* continues to come to mind.

This song has played in countless films over the years. The first was in Disney's ***Fantasia*** (1940). Disney used the song as the scene went from darkness to light. Mary certainly felt the darkness, but soon the Son will rise. At the moment of greatest sorrow, began the moment of greatest JOY.