

1Heaven & Nature Sing
“Mary’s Song”
Luke 1:46-56 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment and welcome our first-time guests and those who are with us online!

The countdown has officially begun...
My four year old Grandson got super excited the other day...Papa it's almost time for Christmas!

Now I know that some of you actually started decorating your home right after Halloween...(We're praying for you ;-)

But how many of you, now that it's December 7th have started decorating? How many of you have your tree up? How many of you have started your shopping?

Now I don't know about you...but when I go
Christmas shopping I have to listen to
Christmas music...

Of course, being Italian...I grew up on Frank
Sinatra...

"Have yourself a Merry little Christmas"

"I'll be home for Christmas"

"Silent Night"

"Little Drummer Boy"

Ezekiel's favorite right now "Jingle Bells"

He's literally walking around our apartment
singing "I love those J.I.N.G.L.E. bells!"

If Ol' Blue Eyes isn't your Christmas go
to...that's okay...

I actually looked up the top 10 most streamed
Christmas songs in 2004...Maybe you'll hear
your favorite...

10. "Feliz Navidad"-Jose' Feliciano
09. "Mistletoe"- Justin Bieber
08. "It's the most wonderful time of the year"-Andy Williams
07. "Snowman"-Sia
06. "Jingle Bell Rock"-Bobby Helms
05. "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas"-Michael Buble'
04. "Rockin around the Christmas Tree"-Brenda Lee
03. "Santa tell me"-Ariana Grande
02. "Last Christmas"-Wham!
01. "All I want for Christmas is you" Mariah Carey

By the way...Mariah Carey has earned over \$60 million dollars from that song in streams alone...(Mariah if you're watching...please be generous and give to our end of the year giving campaign)

Today we're kicking off a brand-new series called "Heaven and Nature Sing" and it's all about Christmas songs...well sort of...

We're going to dive into the various songs from the Gospels that were sung before, during and after the birth of Jesus...

Although these songs aren't in the top ten most streamed Christmas songs...they should be...because they really put the “Christ” in Christmas...and they remind us that Jesus is the reason for the season!

The first song we're going to look at today is sung by Mary the mother of Jesus...

Before we read our text for today, let me give you the back story...Mary is a young girl probably between the ages of 13 and 17 years old...

She's in the family tree of King David but she's poor...She's from a rural little town called Nazareth...

Nazareth was a place you passed through on your way to another town...

You know when you're traveling upstate to get to Albany or Syracuse and you stop in one of those small towns for gas, use the bathroom grab some snacks and get back on the road... That's Mary's town...

Mary's engaged to a craftsman named Joseph...Again...their teens...

Why are they engaged? Because back then marriages were arranged...As a father I kind of like that I'm not going to lie...

Here's how this worked...

The two families would bring the couple together where they would have a ceremony called a betrothal...

It's where you would formally pledge to be married...and the bride and the groom would be joined by a religious leader...

They say a prayer and then go back home with their families and wait for the wedding ceremony which would be about a year later...

There was no huggy, kissy, let's watch Netflix and chill kind of engagement going on...The bride and the groom usually didn't see each other again until the wedding...

Betrothal was so serious that to break off the wedding you had to get a divorce...

Now if you're not familiar with the story...Mary is back home and she's doing her wedding planning...say yes to the dress...when the angel Gabriel appears to her...

Lk 1:30–38 (NIV)

Look at the amazing faith of this young teenage girl...We can learn a lot from Mary...

We've got our life all planned out...and we want God to bless our plans...Here's young Mary saying whatever God wants for me...

She totally trusts God...Not knowing what she's going to tell Joseph...In fact, we know that the conversation didn't go the greatest because Joseph was going to divorce her...

But Matthew's Gospel tells us that Gabriel appeared to Joseph and basically said...she wasn't unfaithful to you...this is all from God...Remember what the Prophet Isaiah foretold?

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.-Is 7:14 (NIV)

So Joseph finally believes...but remember...they live in a small town...everyone knows everyone...

You know there's talk...

Hey...did you see Mary's baby bump?

Yeah...the math doesn't add up...People were talking about adultery...talking about scandal...

Mary's willing to trust God with all of that...

Whatever God wants...I'm His servant...

She goes to visit her older cousin...why? Well, if anyone would understand how Mary...a virgin is now pregnant with the Son of God it would be Elizabeth...

Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah couldn't have children, but God did a miracle and she became pregnant with John the Baptist in her old age...

Now it's not the same exact thing...because John the Baptist was a product of a human sexual relationship between a man and wife...

But she could believe the story that God can do the impossible...she would even believe that Gabriel popped in to speak to her because Gabriel had dropped by to speak to her husband and tell him the good news!

You'll hear more about all of that next week...but you understand why Mary would go see Elizabeth?

Sometimes you need to talk to someone who's been through similar situations...

Luke 1:39-45 (NIV)

Please don't miss that the first person to recognize Jesus was a six month old baby in the womb! This is why we stand in the gap for the unborn...because life starts at conception and God has a purpose and a plan for every single person!

Elizabeth tells Mary that she is blessed among women...why? Because she was chosen by God to be Jesus' mother!

No other woman on earth had this privilege!

Now we get to Mary's song...

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.” 56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.-Lk 1:46–56.

There's so many things we can learn from Mary's song...Like for instance how she quotes so much scripture...But I want to look at three things that this song or poem teaches us...

Mary understood her **NEED**

46 And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,-Lk 1:46-47

What does a savior do? A savior saves someone who needs rescuing...The other day two NYPD officers jumped into the East River to save a man who was drowning...

You only need a savior if you need to be rescued...if you need to be delivered...if you need to be saved...

Now remember what the angel Gabriel said to Mary...

31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.-Lk 1:31 (NIV)

Jesus means “Yahweh is salvation”

Mary is just a teenager...

She's probably pretty scared...

But she's trusting God with her future...

And she begins her song...recognizing her own need of salvation...

She's not perfect...

She's not sinless...

She's a sinner who calls Jesus her Savior!

Now I say this because there's a non-biblical teaching that is held by the Catholic Church as well as some Eastern Orthodox Churches that teach that Mary was free from sin...

So people pray to her...

They worship her...

They give her honor and praise...

Some will take verse 48 out of context and say look...Mary herself said that people will call her blessed...Yes...she's blessed among all women because God has chosen her to give birth to Jesus...But that doesn't make her perfect...or sinless...

Jesus is the only Person to walk this earth who was sinless!

Mary declares that generations will call her blessed..but she doesn't say generations will ask her for a blessing...

Let me show you something from Luke 11...
Jesus is teaching...

27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” What’s she doing? She’s praising

Mary... ***28 He replied,*** Yeah...lets all stop and worship my Mom...NO! He shuts it down...

“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”-Lk 11:27–28.

Nowhere in the Bible are we told to pray to Mary...Nowhere in the Bible are we told that Mary is equal with Jesus...

Mary was highly favored...

Mary was chosen by God and set apart...

But Mary was a sinner who needed saving...

She acknowledges that Jesus isn’t just her Son...He’s her Savior!

That takes humility...

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

In other words...who am I? I'm just a young teenaged girl from a nowhere town...engaged to a poor carpenter...I'm nobody in my society...But I'm somebody to God! He's mindful of me...He sees the humble state **of his servant.**

We learned last week that this word means bondservant or slave in the original Greek...Did you realize that Mary is the first person to declare herself a slave of Jesus? She's saying hey, you know...I've got plans and dreams but my life isn't my own...I'm going to live to serve my God and ***From now on all generations will call me blessed,***

Mary understood her need...she needed a Savior...question: do you understand your need?

Mary understood her GOD

***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.***

Mary understands Who God is...She's saying
the One who sees me...is the One True
God...He is all powerful...all
knowing...everywhere present...He is Holy and
He is merciful!

The very God who simply whispered “let there
be” and the entire universe came into
existence...

Is the same God who whispered “let there be”
and now this humble virgin is a Momma

What can she possibly say except...“The
Mighty One has done great things for me”

Playing Catch with Derik/Dad you can do anything...

As my son grew...he realized that I can't do anything...that I was limited...that I had flaws... Thankfully he still loves me...

Now why am I telling you this?

Because as Christians...the more we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we will discover not that God can't...but that He can actually do more than we thought was possible!

There's nothing that our God can't do!

Mary is a teenager and she gets it!

She's going through quite a lot in her life right now...And only the One True God...The One Who is from everlasting to everlasting...

The One who is Holy...The One who is Merciful...The One who is all powerful is going to be able to help her!

You see, we have a tendency to do the opposite...When we're going through something all we see is the problem...

If our problem is bigger than our "god" then that would mean God is limited in some way...

But if we really understand Who God is...Then we will know that nothing is impossible with God!

Mary understood her need...she was a sinner who needed to be saved...

She understood her God...He is holy and sin separates all of us from Him...but He is merciful...He's not going to give us what we deserve for sinning against Him...

Instead He's going to send His Son Jesus to save us all from our sin...How can He do this? Because He is mighty...and He can do anything!

Now you may be thinking...Great but how exactly does this song help me with my issues and problems?

If you're here today and you're carrying all of this worry and anxiety...think about this...

Mary had a lot to worry about! Now granted none of us are pregnant virgins...but if you're worried about the future...so was Mary

If you're worried about finances...so was Mary
If you're worried about relationships...so was Mary

Mary had no idea what was going to happen when she returned to her small town...

They didn't have FaceTime...She had no idea that Gabriel had talked to Joseph...So she's at her cousins house thinking

Will Joseph still want to marry me?

Will he divorce me?

Will I be pregnant and all alone?

Will my family disown me?

Worse...will they beat me?

In those days women who committed adultery were often taken to the center of town...

stripped mocked and publicly beaten as an example to others...

Not to mention the pressure of parenting God's one and only Son...that's a lot of pressure for a teenager...She's a first-time Mom...what a way to start...Hey here's God's Son...Don't mess up!

Mary has a lot to worry about...but the last thing that we can all learn from Mary today is

Turn your **WORRY** into **WORSHIP**

It's okay to be concerned about your life, and to make plans for your future...but Jesus says in ***Matthew 6:25 "...do not worry about your life-Mt 6:25 (NIV)***

So what do we do? Because for some of us worrying is a full-time job...it's our spiritual gift...it's what we do...we breathe and worry...so what do we do?

We worship...that's what Mary does!

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.-Lk 1:46–49 (NIV)***

Mary says my soul...glorifies the Lord...Some of your translations will say “exalt” some will say “magnify” the Lord

All of these words mean to “lift-up” or to worship God!

Mary’s saying that deep down in the depths of who I am...Even though so much about my life is uncertain right now...

I’m not going to glorify...exalt...magnify all of the “what if’s” and the worries...I’m going to glorify and worship...my God!

I’m going to focus on Who God is...not the unknown...

I'm going to focus on what He's already done in my life...I'm going to remember His promises...He has done great things for me...

Even though I'm not in control...I know my God is in complete control!

Mary is a young woman who has a lot to worry about but she turns her worry into worship and just lifts up...exalts, magnifies and glorifies God in song...in worship!

When was the last time you felt the pressures of the world coming at you and you just busted out in worship to God?

Does it make the potential problems go away?
No, it just helps me see them in perspective to Who my God is!

We have a lot to worry about...but we have a Lord and Savior who is bigger!

What's the Holy Spirit Saying To You?

Altar Time

Pray for those struggling with worry

Pray for those who need a Savior