

SERMON

Luke 1:46-56

Mary's Song of Faith

Nunawading and Waverley, 6-12-20

Dear friends in Christ,

Erik Mataxis has written a book called "Miracles". They are true stories of trust. There are stories here of marriages restored, visions of Jesus, people being healed miraculously, and extraordinary answers to prayer. We trust that Christ will come again. We trust in the resurrection and that when we confess our sins, our Father forgives. We trust in the sacraments that baptism saves us and Christ is truly present with us as we receive his body and blood. We trust in the Father's compassion and care so that everyday he is with us and we can talk to him about what is going on and he will respond. Yet, trust is hard. It is not our natural state to let go and let God. Exercising trust is like being on a public hospital waiting list! Will my turn really come up? You can believe all those wonderful doctrines of Christianity and confess they are true but do you trust them?

Mary's song of trust is an encouragement for us and we certainly need her encouragement. Great things happened to her because she looked away from herself and trusted in the word spoken to her and the promises God made to her through the angel Gabriel. The promises were that she would have a baby without being with Joseph and it would be a boy whom she should call **Jesus because he will be the Saviour. He will be great and will be the Son of the Most High.**

And now we have her song of trust in these promises. There is a list of things here for us to receive as saving gifts: **God is my Saviour, he took notice of the lowly, he has done great things for me, his mercy is on us, he has scattered the arrogant and brought down rulers, lifted up the lowly and the hungry he has filled, he has helped Israel his child.** All these acts of deliverance come down to one thing: the lowliness and helplessness of the believers and God's incredible power to save.

Where does trust start? It starts with our lack and God's sufficiency. Mary spoke of her **lowliness** and **the greatness** of the Lord. We begin with our need and the Lord's willingness to meet it, with our emptiness of soul and his presence filling us. We cannot escape our corrupt nature but in trust we turn to the holiness of God. In this world we are alone and few if any properly understand us but the Lord knows us and takes notice of us, as Mary said. Poverty afflicts many in this world but that is starting point of trust for the Lord is just and can bring about equality for all. We are poor in spirit but he is the Holy Spirit. In this life we have death but Christ is the resurrection and the life. Trust starts with nothingness and comes away with fulness and joy.

Trust is completely resting in the grace of God, like settling into your favourite armchair. Let us trust in God's support. It was displayed by the woman with the **12 year-long flow of blood who touched Jesus' coat** and was healed or by the **Syro-Phoenician woman who said that even puppies can have the scraps that fall**

from the master's table or the **Samaritan woman** at the well who had five husbands and that day received **living water** from Jesus. And then there was Mary who said she was **the Lord's slave** and would place herself in to his care. Trust is completely giving yourself over to the Lord and resting in him.

Trust ignores what goes against it whether it be doubt, testing, or the pressure of friends and culture. It draws on a source of nourishment and life and that come from the Lord. William Wilberforce put before the British parliament a bill to abolish slavery. His own party was against it but as a Christian he knew he was right. Each time his bill was voted down he tried again. He trusted in the Lord and after 11 years finally succeeded. Trust ignores what goes against it and continues to believe.

Trust sees the bigger picture of history, the meta narrative. History is the cross of Jesus. Trust sees through events, all the noise and commentary and sees the cross in it. There have been dangerous ideologies such as communism, persecution of innocent people, empires overrun, world wars but God is the Lord of history. He is within it, suffering, taking the side of the weakest and the victim and then overturning everything ranged against him. Mary saw history through the lens of trust in the cross:

**His mercy is on generation after generation of those who fear him.
By his arm he has done a mighty deed; he has scattered the arrogant in the
plans of their hearts.
He has brought down rulers from [their] thrones and lifted up the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things and sent away the rich empty.
He has helped Israel, his child, to remember [his] mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.**

She trusted that the Lord of history would bring all the affairs of men to an end and begin his his everlasting kingdom into the hearts of people. Trust sees the cross at work in history.

So, let us sing a song of trust emptying ourselves before the Lord so that he can fill us.