

Mary's Song

Luke 1:46-55

December 12, 2021 – Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC

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'Mary Did You Know?' We sing this beautiful song every Christmastide. Our choir will sing it again on Christmas Eve. The lyrics are a gorgeous way of contrasting the very human act of giving birth to a living, breathing infant, with the cosmic change that God is bringing into the world in this particular birth.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?

Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new;

This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you?

Powerful questions!

Today's scripture answers all the questions in this beautiful song. This scripture is often called the Magnificat. It is the canticle or song of praise that Mary utters to her kinswoman Elizabeth, praising God for the new life that is growing in her. Mary sings,

My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

Mary, did you know that this Child that you delivered will soon deliver you? Yes, Mary knows that salvation has come through this child, for her and for all. Mary knows the earth-shattering, life-altering consequences of this pregnancy. Mary knows.

We sing,

Mary, did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would calm a storm with His hand?

Mary knows. She knows that in this child of hers, God will take the side of the poor, of the underdog, of those with no earthly power.

She sings,

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

And again we ask, did you know that

The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again,

The lame will leap, the dumb will speak the praises of the Lamb!

Mary sings these things as though they were already true, that the powerful have already fallen, simply because of this child she is carrying. The tide has already turned. God has already taken a side, the side of those who are hungry and poor and powerless, and you can tell from this scripture that Mary is proud to be on God's side, even though she is not so naïve as to think that the rich and powerful will give up what they have

without exacting a cost from her son, and from her. Even at her young age, she knows the cost. She knows the pain of watching her son, her holy son, stand in the presence of earthly power and take a different side. Mary knows. And yet, she rejoices.

We ask if Mary understands the theological and cosmic significance of this birth. We sing,

Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod,
And when you kiss your little baby you've kissed the face of God?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy Is Lord all creation?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy was Heaven's perfect Lamb,
And the sleeping Child you're holding is the great, the Great I AM?

Mary, did you know?

Mary knows. She understands that this birth is the culmination of God's salvation story for all of Israel. She sings,

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Oh, Mary, Mary, did you know?

Mary knew. She understood what this pregnancy meant for herself and for the whole world. She understood this birth as her own salvation, and the salvation of her people. She knew that God stands on the side of the oppressed and against the oppressors and that this child would call us all to stand there, too. Mary knew the sacrifice that her child faced, and what it would cost her to walk with him on that journey.

Mary knew. And she rejoiced.

Amen