

He Has Done Great Things – Part 3

The Justice of God- Luke 1:52–53

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Dec. 18th, 2022

Intro:

- Emmanuel, God with us, is what Mary was celebrating in her song of praise. This significant and biblically rich song praises God that in Christ there is salvation, that in Christ He has blessed the humble. The one who is mighty has done great things, and holy is His name. Mary reveres God for His mercy and reveres Him for His strength.
- She then turns her song to praise God for His justice, that God through Christ would "bring down the mighty from their thrones" and give dignity to the humble and care for the hungry. This is a powerful statement, and those who were in power were threatened by the words of God in the mouth of this brave woman. Rulers in our world are still threatened by these words even today. Pastors in governmentally registered churches in China are forbidden to speak on or read this passage. The countries of India, Guatemala, and Argentina have banned these words of scripture from being read in churches or in public.
- These words of Scripture—through the mouth of Mary—are indeed dangerous. They are dangerous to those who abuse their positions and power; the child in her womb will bring them down. But these words are also a great comfort to all who have been abused, neglected, and abandoned, to those who have been denied justice.
- Let me encourage you today that the God who is mighty, the God who is holy, the God who is strong, the God who is merciful to those who humbly revere Him, is the God who sees and will bring justice and will set the scales right. Trust in our God of justice, and trust that because He is just, you will receive comfort.

Trust in the God of Justice

Luke 1:52 ESV

He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate.

- He—God the Father—has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate in and through Christ. How has He done this, and when has He done this? And how does this apply to my life?
- We have to remember Mary's situation when she said these words. She and the people of Israel were living under Roman occupation. The Romans called the shots, and the Romans ruled over them, sometimes with brutality. Just a few months after this, the Roman governmental rulers would force this full-term mother to travel 70 miles by foot and pack animals to the city of her ancestry to be counted. This is the same government whose king ordered all the males two years old and under born in Bethlehem to be killed. This is the same government that caused Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to flee as refugees to Egypt for a time because of their brutality. This is the same government that mocked, brutalized, and crucified Christ.
- In this song, Mary used past tense language, "He has brought down," which was not actualized in their present tense experience, nor do we see this type of blanket justice which is described in the history of the world to this present day where there are still abuses of power taking place in various forms in households to governments all over the world.
- This past tense declaration was pointing to a future tense demonstration which is seen from the elevated position of God that in Christ, His justice is guaranteed but not yet completed. The

justice in Christ, who is both the mercy and strength of God, which we saw last week, is guaranteed to happen in the fullness of time.

- Will God right every wrong? Yes, in the fullness of time. Sometimes it happens in the here and now; we should ask God for it and work towards it. And for all time, justice will happen when there will be an accounting on the last day. On that day, the proud and mighty will be held accountable and brought down from their protected positions of power, and those who are of humble estate, those with limited power, resource, and position, will be exalted and exonerated.
- God's Justice is Praiseworthy and Necessary (story from preachingtoday.com)

President Mobutu reigned as the dictator and President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1965 to 1997. But after global political changes, Mobutu was forced out of power, and the country collapsed and descended into conflict and chaos. British pastor Mark Meynell tells the story of his good friend Emma, who witnessed many atrocities committed against his friends and family members. He and his wife and three daughters fled east on foot. Weeks later, they arrived in Uganda as refugees with nothing. After a few months of a miserable existence, he walked past a local seminary and sensed that the Lord was calling him to ministry. The family had been living in one room, without water or electricity, and enough to pay for one meal every two days.

Meynell said that one evening they met in the seminary's tiny library and started talking. As Emma opened his heart and shared the story of the violence and injustice he had witnessed, he started to weep openly, despite the fact that African men never cry in public. Then Emma said these sobering words, "You know Mark, I could never believe the gospel if it were not for the judgment of God. Because I will never get justice in this world. But I couldn't cope if I was NEVER going to see justice done."

Meynell commented, "We in the West often recoil from God's justice for a very simple reason: We've hardly had to suffer injustice. But most people around the globe recognize that God's justice is praiseworthy and great. Of course his mercy and redemption are even greater, but we need his perfect justice as well."

- So how does this affect our lives? As we work and seek justice, we can be confident that justice will be done in the end. This knife also cuts both ways, and we can be confident that if we are the ones who are abusing our power and position, justice will come to us as well. It will be better for you to repent, change your ways, and make amends in humility. Choose to trust in the God of justice. Choose to do good as an act of faith.
- The next thing that Mary mentions is how God will provide comfort to those who have suffered in this world, and that we are to trust in the God of comfort.

Trust in the God of Comfort

Luke 1:53 ESV

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

- In the last section, we see the God of the reversal, where those who are "on high" are brought "low," and those who are "low" are brought "high." We see this same element of justice again where God "filled the hungry with good things," but the "rich he has sent away empty." Again it is interesting to notice the use of verb tense. This is written in the past tense, meaning this has

already happened. However, in reality, there are still those in the world who do not have enough to eat, and there are those who still die of starvation. So how can this be?

- Again, we have to look at the “already, not yet” principle, knowing that in Christ, there is a guarantee that these things will not be forever and that one day all those who have hungered will be satisfied, and those who have had more than their fill, will not be given anything more.
- Jesus taught the same. He said:

Luke 6:21 ESV

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

Luke 16:24-25 ESV

And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

- There will be a reversal of fortunes in the new kingdom. For those who not by their own choosing suffer in lack, in places all over the world, this is the case. One day and forever they will be comforted, as also told in the book of Revelation.

Rev 7:16-17 ESV

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

- This eternal comfort helps us when we see the inequality in the world, and I have seen it firsthand this summer in Kenya and Liberia. There is great comfort in this. However, this does not mean that we do not seek and work to bring aid and comfort to those who are now suffering on earth. We are obligated with an opportunity to bring a little bit of heaven here on earth. And we should work, and pray and give toward this end.
- There also is another category of people who have chosen to follow Christ by living with less than they can and leaving things they love for a greater love of following Christ.

Matt 19:28-30 ESV

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

- This teaching also gives us comfort, knowing that what we “give” or “give up” in this life has its reward, both now and in eternity. It is a profound and true reality that “he is no fool, who gives what he can not keep, to gain what he can not lose” (Jim Elliot).
- What does this mean for our lives now? Take comfort in knowing that through Christ, the great reverse will happen, that in the end, all those who suffer now will be comforted. This gives us strength and perspective to do what we can and long for the day when all that is wrong will be set right. Also, take comfort, all of you who have given much, that what you gain will far out weigh what was given. Be encouraged to continue by these words as you continue to look forward to your reward.

Conclusion

- In all these things, continue to trust God for His justice and comfort. Continue to revere Him for His mercy and strength. Continue to praise Him and Magnify Him, for His salvation, for His blessings, for He has done great things!