

Advent Devotions 2022

Week Three

According to the Promise



Mary's song is a song of protest that trumpets to all that Christ's advent was to be a world transforming event. The God who worked through unlikely people and in unlikely ways was going to do it again. Through an unlikely person, the Messiah was going to be born, and the Messiah was going to alter our expectations of what God's salvation looks like.

Mary's song details such divine, topsy-turvy work just like Hannah in 1 Samuel. Both of them sing of their joy in God because it is God who considers, cares for, acts on behalf of the lowly despite what newsfeeds and newspapers tell us. Hannah and Mary identify that God is going to change our expectations of divine activity in the world.

How does God do this? Mary tells us that God lifts up the lowly. God is going to overturn the power structures in our world that create walls and boundaries, that create economic hardship, that create social structures of haves and have nots. God is going to bring down the powerful and lift up the powerless not so much in a role reversal, but rather in way that creates equality, peace, and justice. And in doing so, God saves those who focus solely on themselves and their striving for success so that their adoration is directed to God. Perhaps we might think of this as God's way of making creation whole through a social leveling.

But the past few years have shown us that we are so far from this reality. I don't have to list the horrors, injustices, plagues, and strife that have been on full display. Because of this, I think we need to hear Mary's song for all of its bold protest and firm resistance to the ways of sin and death that divide us. We need Mary this year; we need some hope.

Mary's song is meant for a time such as this. Mary, a wise theologian of the Bible and perhaps the very first disciple of Jesus, reminds us just what God can and will do. God has promised a Messiah, and God keeps God's promises. The divine presence is coming into the world in ways we least expect, but it will nonetheless upend our lives for the purpose of squashing the powers of sin that run amok. It will make the world right side up. Listen for that song. Look for that star. Emmanuel is coming.