

The True Spirit of Christmas (Part 1)

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Preacher: Don Coleman

[0:00] Take your Bibles, if you would, this morning and turn to Luke chapter 1.

! I gave you a heads up last Sunday morning. You might remember that we're going to be looking at a familiar passage of Scripture, though we're going to just really barely scratch the surface of it. But in Luke chapter 1, starting with verse 46, we have the famous Psalm of Mary, the Magnificat. And we'll read that here in just a moment. But before we do that, I want to begin with a question. Sometimes it's good to start a sermon with a question, just by way of introduction. And I'll give you kind of a warning. This is going to be a rather lengthy introduction. Because I want us to kind of set the stage here, kind of set the table, in a sense, for a very important truth that I think all of us, most of us anyway, in here know.

[1:15] Very important, very profound reality concerning this season, particular season, that I am sure, and you would agree with me, I'm sure has been lost or all but lost in this season because of various other trappings that go along with Christmas that are enjoyable, that we certainly participate in, and some of that is all right that we do.

But kind of putting it on the backstage, one of the most profound realities about Christmas, really a profound reality about Christianity, and what we ought to be, as Christians, ought to be involved in every time we meet together, and not just when we meet, but even in our personal lives.

Well, let me get on with the question. The question is, what is the true spirit of Christmas? How many of you, if you'll think about it, have heard that phrase?

Not the question so much, but just the phrase, true spirit of Christmas. How many of you have heard that before? Just raise your hand.

I have, this season already, I can't tell you how many times, actually. We enjoy watching some of the Christmas movies, and already we have done that.

[2:53] And some of them, you know, are old, and some of them are fairly new. Some of them serious stories, plots, some of them whimsical and comedic.

And yet, I think already, I have heard this expression at least a half a dozen times. Just amazing. And especially since I've been preparing to preach this message this morning, I guess my attention is kind of alerted to it.

And I have heard this, the true spirit of Christmas is in the heart. You've heard that, haven't you? I've heard exactly that way. Now, no definition comes along with that.

That is, they're not necessarily defining just what that spirit of Christmas is. I guess the phrase is attempting to locate where it exists, and that is in the heart.

And, of course, some who will make such a statement mean one thing, and others mean another thing. And it's kind of left to us to just make up our own minds what we might mean when we say that the true spirit of Christmas is in the heart.

[4:08] Well, I wouldn't debate the location. But what I would like to ask is, what is it? What is the true spirit of Christmas?

The Christmas spirit. Well, let me give you a few possibilities, okay? Number one, to Ebenezer Scrooge. You know, Dickens' Christmas Carol.

To Ebenezer Scrooge, the Christmas spirit is a series of ghosts that visit with him throughout the night. You know, the spirit of Christmas past and present and future.

And these ghosts that visit with Scrooge, of course, old Scrooge, they come with primarily a social message.

And so, we can glean from Scrooge that the spirit of Christmas is a giving spirit. That is, if you want to truly participate with the true spirit of Christmas, then we're to be giving people, giving to those in need.

[5:20] Which is good, isn't it? There's nothing wrong with that. That's primarily the message there. So, is that the true spirit of Christmas? Well, in a sense, I guess we would say that it is.

Certainly a part of it. But, to the kind of shifting gears here, I mean extremely shifting gears, to the beverage alcohol industry, the Christmas spirit is something that comes in a bottle, right?

You say, I don't really want to consider that. But, it is true. Many look to the bottle for the spirit of Christmas. And, by the way, Americans will spend approximately \$75 million this month alone for this kind of, quote, spirit or spirits.

Third, to the troubled family. Third, to the troubled family.

Christmas spirit. Is that the true Christmas spirit? I don't think so. Though, obviously it's a good idea for those families who can't seem to get along at any other time of the year to at least pick one day when they kind of put the hostilities aside.

[7:11] Well, let me go on with a few more possibilities. To most Americans, about 95% to be exact, the Christmas spirit is really the sentiment that is included in a Christmas card, printed on a Christmas card.

That's the Christmas spirit. And, approximately 5 billion Christmas cards will be sent out this time of the year. To little boys and girls.

And, we had a group of them up here earlier this morning. But, to boys and girls everywhere, the Christmas spirit might be defined this way. That it is contentment when they don't get exactly what they ask for when they open up their presents on Sunday morning.

And, we kind of, you know, praise them. You've got the real Christmas spirit. I know you wanted this, but we couldn't afford that, so we got this.

So, is that the Christmas spirit? It's not a bad thing, of course, when that happens in the family. Like the little girl who was asked, did you get everything you wanted this Christmas?

[8:13] To which she responded, no, I didn't. But, then it wasn't my birthday anyway. And, that's a pretty good, pretty good philosophy.

What is the true spirit of Christmas then? Let me give you another possibility. To those who love to eat, and I'm one. And, I'm looking at others here.

Love to eat. To them, the Christmas spirit is found in a fellowship of family and friends around a holiday feast.

And, I enjoy that. And, Americans, by the way, this Christmas will consume 10 to 15 million turkeys. Amazing, isn't it? And, that's not counting all the other trappings, all the other add-ons to the turkey. You know, the dressing and all those things. And, especially the desserts and stuff. And, is that the Christmas spirit? Well, it's part of how we celebrate the holiday.

[9:17] But, I don't think that's the true Christmas spirit. Christmas spirit. Christmas spirit. Christmas spirit. Christmas spirit. Sadly, to far too many Americans in our culture today.

Christmas spirit is an evil spirit. Christmas spirit. Christmas spirit. In the sense that, for many, Christmas is a time of profound sadness.

For various reasons. Various things have happened or are happening in their lives. Those who deal with depression.

Those who deal with depression. They tell us that this time of the year, that depression is usually heightened in their life.

Those who have had tremendous loss in life. Maybe a loved one that is not here anymore. And, this time of the year is a sad time. Because, that loved one is missing.

[10:19] Maybe, for financial reasons. The spirit of Christmas is a, kind of an evil spirit. Like, one poet wrote. Christmas is a bitter day for mothers who are poor.

The wistful eyes of children are daggers to endure. Though shops are crammed with playthings enough for everyone. If a mother's purse is empty, there might as well be none.

And, then this particular poet ended with a more personal note. My purse is full of money, but I cannot buy a toy. Only a wreath of holly for the grave of my little boy.

And, so, for Christmas, sometimes for many, it is a troubled time. The spirit is more of an evil spirit that is dealt with.

I suppose, though, for the majority of Americans, the Christmas spirit is to be found in gift giving. Right? And, as we do this time of the year.

[11:28] We give gifts. And, that's an important part of the holiday, isn't it? I mean, just ask the malls about that. Some of the other major retailers, you know.

And, the great throngs of shoppers that crowd into these stores shoulder to shoulder. And, they're looking for these, that special gift or that special item.

And, they'll spend, Americans will spend billions of dollars on everything from candy canes to diamond rings. Just ask Walmart, who, by the way, this year boasted of having sales in excess of two billion dollars on the day after Thanksgiving.

Just in one day. That's a big part of this season, isn't it? And, yet, obviously, that's not the true spirit of Christmas.

Now, the gift giving, the giving, that idea of giving is certainly a big part of what Christmas is all about. But, I'm talking about the true spirit of Christmas.

[12 : 36] So, let's get down to the real truth here. Though, all of these things, the things that I've mentioned, well, all but maybe a few of them, certainly identify important aspects of the Christmas holiday.

But, they do not, in and of themselves, define the true spirit of Christmas. And, so, what is it? The true spirit of Christmas. Well, like most questions, important questions, the Bible's the best place to go if you're looking for an answer.

And, since the question pertains to Christmas, then, I suppose the best place to look would be to look at the Bible where we are given accounts of the very first Christmas.

And, maybe there we'll discover what the true spirit of Christmas is. And, it's not really many things, though it may manifest itself in a number of different ways.

It is one thing that I want us to discover this morning. Let's begin, for example, with Elizabeth, Mary's cousin.

[13 : 37] You don't need to turn to these, though they're all kind of right around the text, which we're going to be settling upon eventually. But, in Luke chapter 1, verse 41, the Bible says, And it happened when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb.

That is, in Elizabeth's womb. She was carrying John the Baptist, of course, at the time. The baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let's move over here to Mary's husband, Zacharias. In Luke chapter 1, verse 67. Now, his father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

And he goes on. Can we glean anything here, or surmise anything at this point, from Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, to her husband, Zacharias?

Can we surmise anything from that, as to just what the true spirit of Christmas might be? Well, I think so, but let's move on. How about the angels?

[14 : 59] In Luke chapter 2, in verse 13. And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host.

And what were they doing? Praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward man. Can we learn anything there, from the angels, as to what the true spirit of Christmas is?

Let's move on. How about the shepherds? In Luke chapter 2, in verse 20. Then the shepherds returned. They had just been to see the babe there in the manger, just like the angels said they would find him.

Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told them. How about Simeon?

A little bit later in the chapter. Chapter 2, verse 25. Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. And this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Spirit.

[16 : 09] The Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord Christ, the Messiah.

And so he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms.

And what did he do? He blessed God and said, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, the light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.

You learn anything from Simeon about what this true spirit of Christmas might be? Let's take one more. For Anna, a little bit later in the chapter, Luke chapter 2, verse 36.

Now there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity.

[17 : 19] And this woman was a widow of about 84 years who did not depart from the temple but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant, she gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

What was Anna's reaction to the coming of the Lord Jesus? I say her reaction, as well as Simeon's, as well as the shepherds and the angels and Zacharias and Elizabeth, their reactions revealed to us the true spirit of Christmas.

Have you discovered what it is yet? Don't forget also those that are mentioned not by Luke but mentioned by Matthew, the wise men in Matthew chapter 2 verse 2.

The Bible says, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we are come to worship him. And even Herod, by the way.

The Bible says that when you have found him, he's speaking to the wise men, When you have found him, bring me word again that I may come and worship him also. Now of course he was lying.

[18 : 46] That's not what he wanted to do. But Herod did at least understand the appropriate response to a king. And that response is worship.

So what is it? The true spirit of Christmas. Surely you know. In a word, it's worship. Isn't it?

It's worship. The spirit of Christmas and all of these people that I have highlighted who are in and around the Christmas story, the story of the very first Christmas, the coming of Christ, the Christ child, all of these people who participated there in the first Christmas, the spirit of Christmas was for them praise.

It was adoration. It was thanksgiving. It was blessing and glory offered up to God in one word.

It's worship. It's worship. Christmas time is a time to be a time of worship.

[19 : 59] plain and simple. And worship is, as we shall see, see from Mary, an attitude of the heart.

A heart that is just so filled with wonder and gratitude toward God that there is no room left to focus on personal need.

That worship is a spirit thing. A true worship. A true spirit of Christmas. It's a spiritual thing. It is something, as we shall see, that comes from within.

And worship is, then, therefore, to be the most selfless thing we do because worship is to be so grateful and so full of wonder at what the Lord has done that really there's no room for anything else.

And we lose ourselves in true praise and worship. there's not a better time to teach a lesson on worship than this time of the year than Christmas.

[21 : 09] As I mentioned the various or highlighted the various people who participated in the first Christmas, I, by the way, did leave one very important one out, so I've already mentioned her name, and that's Mary.

That's Mary, the mother of Jesus. And so, this morning, let's learn about the spirit of Christmas, the true spirit of Christmas, which is worship from Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, again, we're going to be looking at her psalm, her psalm of praise. It's a psalm of praise and worship. It is a magnificent psalm. It is the magnificat.

And so, now you have hopefully turned your Bibles, in your Bibles, to Luke chapter 1, and let me begin reading verse 46 and following. But we're just going to barely get into this, and the key, the key to this, or not the key, the focus here is going to be on what this teaches us about worship.

Here it is. And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord. And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, for He has regarded the lowly state of His made servant.

[22 : 26] For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name, and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with His arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich. He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy. He has spoken as He has spoken or as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to His seed forever.

Now, there it is. Tremendous song. And Mary says quite a bit, doesn't she, here? And yet, what I want us to see primarily is her worship.

How this psalm of praise teaches us something about worship. There's a great deal we can learn about. And we're going to, I'm not going to have time to cover all of it here this morning.

[23:42] That's why I'm going to take two Sundays to do this. To focus on her worship. To glean from it what true worship is for us.

And so, we're going to look then at the subjects of worship. That'll be our focus. That's you and me. We already know, don't we, the object of worship? We should. I mean, the object of our worship is to be the Lord.

The Lord God. Mary, by the way, if I might remind you again here, she said, my soul magnifies the Lord. So, the object of worship for Mary and for us is the Lord God.

She said, my soul magnifies the Lord. She said, my spirit has rejoiced in God, my Savior. Clearly, the object of worship is the Lord.

[24:46] And just as clear is the sad reality that many people have forgotten that in Christendom today.

Especially in churches that operate and function right here in our culture, in our culture, in our country. Forgotten. That really, the object of worship is to be the Lord God.

And for some strange reason, well, actually, it's not so strange, but many have turned the worship towards self and focused worship upon self and the flesh.

And how sad that is. But clearly, I mean, you cannot read the Bible. Not just simply Mary's example here, but many others that we could turn to and other prescriptions in Scripture that deal with worship.

You cannot miss the reality that the object of worship is to be God. It's to be Him and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That certainly was the case with Mary.

[25:57] It's clear. Now, also clear, I think, is that the subjects of worship is you and me.

That we are the subjects of worship. That is, in this sense, we worship the Lord. We do that. That's what Mary was doing and that's what we must do.

That's why we assemble here on Sunday mornings and Sunday nights and at other times when we gather together as the assembly, as God's people and we do this to worship.

We worship Him and so we're the subjects of worship. Now, how does worship happen in the subjects of worship? How does it happen in us? That is, what does it look like?

What does it sound like? What does it feel like? From where does it come? That's what we need to, that truth we need to delve into here this morning. If I'm going to make the statement that Christmas, the true spirit of Christmas is worship, then what does that look like?

[27:04] Or what should it look like? And we can learn all of that from Mary. And so, let's look at Mary's psalm and learn that from her.

And let's see, first of all, I'm going to actually, I'm going to highlight four things about worship. two of them this morning and two next Sunday, so you'll have to come back. But two things this morning about Mary's worship.

In the first place, we see that worship, that is the true spirit of Christmas, is an internal reality.

Now, let me explain it as we go along. Let's just put it under that peg to begin with. The true worship is internal.

It's an internal reality. That is, in this sense, it's something that comes from within. Right? It does.

Our worship comes from within.

[28:12] It does not come from without. It comes from inside. Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord.

And in the very next sentence, or next phrase, she says, in verse 47, My spirit. Do you see that? My soul magnifies the Lord.

My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. Now, I understand, both soul and spirit are descriptive words, and they describe the inner person.

An inner person, or the inner reality of that person. And yet, on the other hand, it seems that we define, tend to define worship according to external things.

that is, according to visible manifestations. In fact, many of us, if we were pressed to define what worship is, much of our definition, most of our definitions would be descriptive.

[29:19] We would describe external things. And we'd say, that's worship, or this is worship, or that's what worship is, and so forth. And so we tend to do that by the visible manifestations.

So we judge, then, therefore, the reality of true worship, a person's worship, by what we can see. And this has led, I think, most of us, to narrowly define worship based upon just a few select activities, or physical manifestations, such as singing.

Is singing worship? If we're defining worship, and we understand that, that, with Mary, anyway, and I think it's clear that she exemplifies what true worship is, that it comes from the soul and spirit, then singing may be a manifestation of it, but that's not the worship in itself.

And so we can worship without singing, can't we? We can worship without music at all. perish the thought. I mean, really.

See, what we're trying to do here, what I'm trying to do is get us to see what true worship is. In its real essence. And it's not necessarily singing.

[30:46] It's not necessarily music. It's not necessarily speaking certain words. Worship is not singing singing certain kinds of songs.

And so, we've even brought it to another level that this is worshipful and this is not worshipful in the context of singing. Because we have misunderstood that the true definition of worship is something that comes, that goes deep inside of a person.

It's an internal reality. Some would say that it is raising of hands, that that is worship. Anything wrong with raising of hands?

Not at all. Not at all. Is that the worship? No, it's a manifestation, it's an expression. But the true worship came much deeper or it's not worship.

Because you see, all these things I've mentioned and some would even add other things that I would not agree with like speaking in tongues and other kinds of manifestations such as that.

[31:55] Some would then look at these things and say, these things are all worship and yet I assure you that you can do all of those things and not be worshiping. Not true worship.

Because true worship comes from within. An internal reality. See, worship is not first an emotion. It's not first that. worship is not a performance. Though the line between the two are sometimes blurred and hard to see clearly.

But worship is not first these things. Worship is not a set of words. It's not a set of actions. Now, worship, by the way, at some point may and will manifest itself in different ways and it will manifest itself in words, in action, in emotion.

It certainly did with Mary. It didn't. Or we would not have this great psalm included in Scripture. It eventually manifests itself in these other ways and probably in more ways than we can surmise from just the words of Scripture because we were not there when Mary had this experience of worship.

[33:25] But it begins, it comes from inside, deep within, from the soul, from the spirit.

Now, having said that, there is an external aspect of worship. I mean, there is, but it's not what you think or what many think. I appreciate Jonathan dear.

I praise God that God has sent him, Chriselda, to us and his leadership in worship. I just, I thank God for that.

Don't you? Amen. Jonathan takes this thing of worship very seriously. You know that, don't you? He leads. And he is training a choir and others to help in the leadership of worship.

[34:29] But, Jonathan does not and cannot produce worship. Cannot do it. He can't do it. No worship leader can produce worship.

No special soloist, no matter how gifted, can do that. No certain style of music, and that's a big subject with many in God's kingdom today.

No style of music can do it. Worship does not come from here, this stage. It doesn't come from here.

It comes from there. From you. It comes from inside. to that's why, and I'm going to get on to some of you, that's why when there's no participation, when a person does not participate in the worship, that's why it could be a very serious indicator of something wrong inside.

Jonathan can't make worship happen. It comes from inside.

[35:59] It comes from within. An internal reality. Now, I did say, though, that there is an aspect of worship that is external, and I want to get to that. That's very important.

And this applies here to Mary as well. There is an external aspect. aspect to worship. Everything we need to experience worship is not inside of us.

In fact, it doesn't, in that sense, doesn't really begin here. Now, the expression of worship, the reality of worship, begins in here. But it begins there because of something else that's external. An external aspect of revelation. Do you know what it is? I mean, I just said what it was. Of worship. That external aspect is revelation. Revelation?

You mean the book of revelation? No. I mean God's revelation. That is, God's word. That's where it begins. That is, rather, the external aspect of worship.

[37:07] It is a word from God. That's what Mary got. She got a word from God. I mean, directly, almost directly, in the sense that it came directly from God to his chief angel, Gabriel.

She got a verbal word from God. And it produced in her a worship that came from her soul and spirit. And so the external aspect of worship is revelation.

It's the word of God. You see, here's how it works. First, God speaks. And that is an astounding fact, isn't it?

Have you ever thought about that? That God actually spoke. We have a written record of what he spoke right here. But he spoke.

I'm talking about God. The God of the universe, the God of all creation, the eternal God, spoke. In fact, it's such an astounding reality that really what we're doing here today would not be happening today if it were not for the fact that God in times past and in many different ways has spoken unto us by the prophets and in these last days unto us by his son, Jesus.

[38:33] God spoke. What an astounding fact. And then God had it written down. And then God gave the mandate to preach it. And that's why I'm here. I tell you the very basis for Christian preaching is that God has spoken.

What makes Christian preaching, by the way, unique above all other kinds of public speaking is that we are speaking, I'm speaking what God has said.

God spoke. That's where it begins. Alright, so God speaks, that's his revelation, and then man hears it. Because God has created the ears to hear.

God spoke and we listen. We hear. Let me just say hear rather than listen because listen carries another connotation. We'll get to that. But here's how it works.

God speaks, man hears it, and then the next step, he understands. He listens and understands. that is not necessarily understand the gravity of what God has spoken, not necessarily yet, but he does understand what he has said.

[39:38] That's an important aspect of Christian preaching as well, isn't it, in teaching? We not only tell you what he said, but try to help you understand what it means.

And yet, that's still not enough yet. We're not quite there. God speaks, man hears, he understands what God has said, and then it moves further down into his life, and man comprehends the significance.

Are you getting this down? This is how it works. Now it happens just like that. But this is the process. God speaks, man hears, he understands, and then in his heart he comprehends.

Wow! What a great thing God has said. What a great thing God has done. a comprehension. And so then next, the will responds.

You didn't know all this stuff was happening when you experienced true worship, did you? You didn't know that all these steps took place. How many took place very quickly? But the will is then moved to respond, and that's of course what rules what the body does, the will.

[40:55] And then next, or I would say even finally, the emotions are engaged. Emotion takes place. And that's going to vary of course from person to person depending on how you're wired, and it'll vary of course from woman to man, and sometimes how our individual make up.

But it is interesting though, and I really believe this is the right order, that whereas some have put emotion at the top, emotion really is the last thing. And it's a very poor gauge of true worship, by the way.

But this is how it happens. This is how it works. God speaks, man hears, he understands, he comprehends, and it moves the will, and the will responds, and it governs what that man does, or woman does, and then the emotions are engaged, and that's exactly what we see happening with Mary.

exactly the same thing. It all began with an awesome revelation that she's going to be the mother of the Messiah. It began with a revelation, and then what was produced inside of Mary was a psalm of worship.

Literally, we could say, and we'll see here in a moment, an explosion of worship, an explosion of emotion. You cannot read this psalm of praise without gleaning from it the clear message that Mary was overcome with emotion.

[42:29] So emotion's part of it. But it began inside. As God spoke, and she comprehended, and emotions were engaged, an internal reality.

God said, we understand the God's God's worship, we understand a second thing, something I think all of us need to learn, especially some of us men, who tend to be a whole lot more stoic about things.

things. Because the second thing we see here is not only that worship is an internal reality, it is also an intense response.

There's a response. With Mary, as it ought to be with us, when we come face to face with the awesome revelation, God's grace, love, there ought to be an intense response.

I want you to notice something here. Mary said, my soul magnifies. That's in the King James, the New King James version.

[43:56] Others may use a different word. like enlarged might be in your translation. Let's just think about the word magnifies.

She said, my soul magnifies the Lord. And it means to exalt. Yet, what does that mean? Well, literally it means to raise something up to the highest level of worth and value.

Now we're really getting to the heart of what worship is. It's intense. It is a response.

It is to exalt the Lord. He's the object of our worship. To raise him up to the highest level of worth and value.

That's really what it is. Now in the Greek language, the word is megaluno. You don't know the Greek word and yet I bet you recognize a part of that word. We're mega.

[45:05] You know what that means, don't you? It means a whole lot of something. Mega. It means something big. Something huge. And so what Mary was doing here was something more than just simply mere exaltation.

It was mega exaltation. That's why I say that it's an intense response. And then when you actually look at the meaning of the word megaluno, it means to cause to swell.

I mean just the bare definition of the word. Cause to swell or to enlarge. You say I don't understand the connection here.

Well maybe you could understand it better using kind of a musical concept or symbol like the crescendo.

Some of us might understand that. Like the crescendo of a piece of music in a piece of music where it starts at one point and then it is becoming larger and larger and larger and in essence Mary was saying my soul is enlarged and enlarging when I consider what the Lord has done for me.

[46:33] And so in a sense we could apply that not only to the event of worship where there is a crescendo in the worship that's all orchestrated by God in our hearts but we could also expand that to the journey our journey here on this planet as one of God's redeemed children and as we mature and grow in our faith and we learn more about God's word and more about the significance of what God has done for us then our worship does get larger and larger and larger it's mega luno larger causing to swell and then when you add the word rejoice that's what she said there in verse 47 my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior you had the word rejoice and that word means overjoyed overjoyed we just you know we just use words and and we use them in all kinds of different contexts and that's why it's so important when we study scripture to find out what that word means right there and the significance of it in its context and the idea is to be overjoyed and really that doesn't do it justice because the idea is to reach a place of unspeakable joy in expressible joy is the idea here and yet the word literally means an out loud joy that's kind of interesting

I just said really the idea is that it's inexpressible or that it is unspeakable and yet it is something we can speak but it's something that we express it's an out loud it's not a secret thing you know we might just succumb to the notion that well you know my worship of the Lord is a private thing and sometimes it is but if it's only there in a private kind of experience then your your worship the Lord is not enlarged and enlarging because she said I my worship is out loud out loud rejoice and so really

the idea is that it is uncontained that's really the the the the bare meaning uncontained joy some of

God's people seem to be pretty pretty good at containing joy I'm good at it some of you are too oh yeah I thank the Lord but our joy our worship is at various times and in in in the larger picture is to be something that's uncontained that was certainly the case with me he put these two components together these two components of worship we'll see a couple more next Sunday put them together it's an internal reality it filters down from the mind as it understands

God's word and it bubbles up and out from the heart that comprehends the significance when Mary came to grips with what God had done for her and what God was going to do for her it literally captured her soul we should be no less it should be no less with us it got every part of her inner being it it erupted!

in an intensity worship one preacher put it that's the stuff of which worship is made but don't forget it all starts with a word from God it all starts with his revelation first the facts then the expression the emotion first the facts that's that's why music we use in worship must be biblical doctrinal must be loaded with the truths of the faith you know not just some repetition of words designed to stir up some kind of emotional frenzy which is what some think worship music should be and that's why preaching must be biblical not just some string of engaging stories and you know maybe helpful ethical principles for living the Bible does touch on those but it needs to be biblical

[52:25] Mary's Magnificat was an intense response to God's revelation given to her what it was and that revelation given to Mary well that revelation means a great deal to us as well doesn't it in fact it is the supreme fact of Christmas that's what the revelation was that caused her to you know to erupt in such such a profound event of worship for her the supreme fact of Christmas do you know what it is the supreme fact of Christmas the one fact that accounts for the true spirit of Christmas that is of course worship the fact that fact that should produce in all of us intense worship well God used the angel Gabriel to reveal it first to

Mary then to her husband Joseph and later to the shepherds in fact in Luke chapter 2 verse 8 now there were in the same country shepherds living in the fields keeping watch over their flock by night and behold an angel of the Lord stood before them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were greatly afraid then the angel said to them do not be afraid for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people for there is born to you this day in the city of David what a savior a savior who is Christ the Lord a savior that's the the supreme fact of Christmas in a sense the birth of Christ marked the high water point in redemptive history now it wouldn't be complete until after the resurrection but it marked the high water mark in redemptive history a profound moment in history in the history of the world a savior coming that's what the angel said to the shepherd that's what the angel said to

Mary to Joseph to Zachariah to Elizabeth to Anna and the others a savior coming and he did come he did come a savior that's the supreme fact of Christmas Emmanuel God with us coming to us saving us that's the supreme fact a savior who would take upon himself the judgment of God for sinners and he would be punished in our place the spotless perfect sinless pure lamb of God will come and die for sinners and he did come and he did die for me that's the supreme fact of Christmas you understand that as symbolically the lamb died in the place of sinner in the Old Testament economy the Old Testament sacrificial system this lamb the one born there in Bethlehem the spotless pure lamb of God would die for sinners and he would die under the execution of God's wrath his holy wrath upon sin and God literally would execute his son Jesus for my sin for your sin since the penalty was fully paid by this one who came there born in a stable laid there in a manger since the full debt was paid God was then free to forgive me and to justify me and to save me and to take me to heaven when I die and not to send me to hell to bear the punishment for my sin there because Jesus did that he bore all my sin at the cross that's the supreme fact of Christmas that is the revelation that enlarged Mary's soul and led her to a place of worship true worship that's the true spirit of Christmas a savior a savior you understand that it's not about Santa Claus it's not about little cute little pointed eared elves I'm not opposed to some of that being a part of the celebration that is the trappings of the holiday don't misunderstand me but it's not about that it's not about Christmas trees and we've got two of them in our house we've got a hundred of them right here in this church I like them it's not about that it's about a savior that's coming a savior [58:18] Emmanuel God with us saving us you