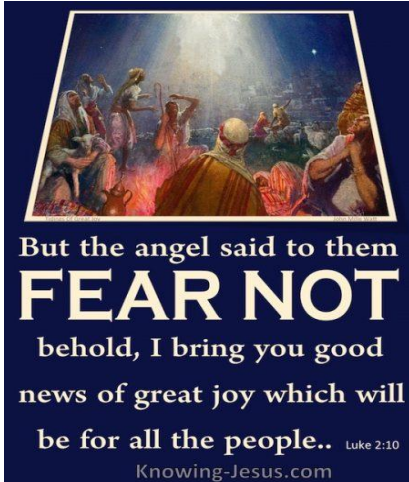


# Guided by a cloud 39 (Exodus 13:21-22)



We are now on the third Sunday of Advent and will be lighting the Joy candle. It is also known as the Shepherd Candle to highlight the joy the shepherds experienced when they received the good news about Christ's birth (Luke 2:8-20). During the middle of the night, the darkest time, the shepherds encountered angels.

## Worship time

[My Jesus my Saviour](#)

[Joy to the world](#)

[O come all ye faithful](#)

## Mary's song – Luke 1

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

'My soul glorifies the Lord

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

<sup>48</sup> for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me – holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

<sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

<sup>55</sup> to Abraham and his descendants for ever, just as he promised our ancestors.'

## What do we know about Mary?

Mary had great trust in God. Mary had been raised in a poor, but godly home, where life was probably hard. When she heard she was to be the mother of the Messiah, she didn't know how it would turn out for her, either in her present or future. She simply heard the angel say, "For nothing will be impossible with God" (v. 37) and answered with total readiness, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be done to me according to your word." (v. 38) Mary had learned through the hard times that God was faithful, and trusted Him even though she didn't fully understand. From what the angel told her, Mary was in no doubt of the identity of the Son she would bear.

There are two stanzas in her song of response. The first focuses on undeserved Grace for her and all of us. Mary sees herself as a sinner and like all of us in need of rescue. She sings of God looking on the humble condition of His servant in v. 48. Literally, she sees her littleness, both in the world's eyes and in God's. Her words tell us that Mary felt totally unworthy to be chosen of God. However, she sees God's actions toward her as evidence of His mercy (v. 50). She is amazed at a God who knows her so well and chooses her anyway. We may have similar feelings as Mary at times but we too have a God who knows us inside out and chooses us anyway.

The second stanza looks at God's rescuing power. In v. 51-55, Mary sings of radical reversals from what our world values, to something that magnifies God's justice for His people. He will rescue the helpless, v. 51. He will exalt the humble, v. 52. He will fill the hungry, v. 53

This morning as we look forward to the birth of Jesus and also remember what He will ultimately do for each of us, we can join Mary in rejoicing in God our Saviour. We can thank God that He loves the forgotten and the passed over. He pledges Himself to those who know that they are the handicapped, the nobodies, the losers. He shows mercy to those who don't deserve it, he chooses the lowly over the proud, and he finds the hungry and fills them. God is on the side of those who can't take care of themselves. We can rejoice knowing God has chosen and loves us too.

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you" 1Peter 5:7