

Series: ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS...

Text: Luke 1:46-56

Title: "To Notice the Least"

Introduction: WELCOME, BMZ! Glad you're with us TODAY for "**ALL I WANT for CHRISTMAS...**" Now, you and I MIGHT KNOW what WE WANT for CHRISTMAS, but ... YOU GUESSED IT ... WE are going to TALK about what JESUS WANTS **FROM US** and **FOR US** as we CONSIDER CHRISTMAS.

First – JESUS said, "**ALL I WANT for CHRISTMAS is for YOU ALL to LOVE EACH OTHER.**" So, THIS Christmas, we will MAKE a DIFFERENCE in our WORLD by being CHRIST-LIKE. "**Love One Another, as I have Loved You, you MUST LOVE EACH OTHER.**" They will KNOW we are CHRISTIANS by our LOVE. Let's LOVE by HELPING people in our AREA as well as ORPHANS across the GLOBE. Let's LOVE by being KIND to OTHERS in this STRESSFUL TIME of the YEAR.

LAST WEEK – TOUGH STUFF. IF we ASK JESUS WHAT He WANTS for HIS BIRTHDAY, PREPARE to HEAR The TRUTH. We used the STORY of MARY, the MOTHER of Jesus, to be REMINDED that JESUS wants us to have FULL-TERM FAITH ... a FAITH that is REAL and LIVED OUT in our DAILY LIVES. *Immanuel* = God WITH Us!

THIS WEEK, we are going to use MARY AGAIN. Her WORDS of PRAISE are going to HELP US DISCOVER GOD'S PRIORITIES (in your notes). **Discovering God's Priorities:**

Here is the SET-UP. Since LAST WEEK, some TIME has PASSED. MARY TRIPPED to JUDEA to VISIT her COUSIN, ELIZABETH (Also PREGNANT). When MARY ARRIVED, ELIZABETH KNEW MARY had been OBEDIENT to GOD and MARY'S CHILD (like Elizabeth's) was SPECIAL / Of GOD ... Mary was the MOTHER of HER LORD! (You should READ LUKE 1 ... and 2!)

Anyway, that SEEMS to have CAUSED MARY to REMEMBER to GIVE THANKS to GOD for her BLESSINGS! This is often called: "**THE MAGNIFICAT.**" Mary wanted to MAGNIFY the LORD and NOT HERSELF. **LUKE 1:46-47 = ⁴⁶ Mary responded, "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. ⁴⁷ How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!"**

BEFORE we go FURTHER ... WHAT is it that CAUSES YOU to REMEMBER to GIVE THANKS to GOD for His MANY BLESSINGS in YOUR LIFE?

OKAY ... IF we are going to DISCOVER GOD'S PRIORITIES / What JESUS wants for CHRISTMAS, we need to LISTEN to MARY. As she PRAISES GOD, she PRAISES GOD for THREE (3) THINGS. She STARTS with REMEMBERING what GOD DID for MARY!

#1 = What God Did For MARY

Listen, WE ALSO are REMINDED by THIS SCRIPTURE and MANY OTHERS to THANK GOD for ALL He has BLESSED us with ... the THINGS we NOTICE as well as the THINGS we do NOT PAY ATTENTION TO. IOW – You and I are BLESSED in MORE WAYS than we RECOGNIZE.

But MARY SAW ... "**How my spirit REJOICES in GOD MY SAVIOR!**" ... God as her SAVIOR! If GOD is NOT YOUR SAVIOR, you are MISSING a BIG PRAISE! MARY had an UNDERSTANDING that SHE was a SINNER, and she had NO WAY of ACHIEVING SALVATION on her OWN. She NEEDED a SAVIOR!

Mary UNDERSTOOD her NEED for a SAVIOR. Do YOU? We sometimes think we are GOING in the RIGHT DIRECTION and just NEED a LITTLE ASSISTANCE from JESUS. NO! We are RUNNING in the WRONG DIRECTION with our SIN and WE NEED RESCUED! We tend to TREAT our SIN like a HEADACHE, when ACTUALLY it is a LETHAL CANCER. You can't just TAKE a PILL. You NEED CHEMO and ONLY JESUS can ADMINISTER IT!

Please STOP taking your SIN and your SALVATION LIGHTLY. JESUS DOESN'T! He DIED for YOU to LIVE. MARY UNDERSTOOD her DESPARATE NEED for a RESCUER ... NOT just a LITTLE ASSISTANCE. Do YOU?

Mary continues ... LUKE 1:48-49 = ⁴⁸ *For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed.* ⁴⁹ *For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me.* ²

Do NOT MISS this ... This TEENAGE GIRL from NAZARETH FIGURED OUT what GOD'S PRIORITIES through her OWN EXPERIENCE. He TOOK NOTICE / Was MINDFUL of / PAID ATTENTION TO / MADE PRIORITY a LOWLY SERVANT GIRL and BLESSED HER! God could have CHOSEN ANYONE, and HE CHOSE a POOR GIRL from NAZARETH (the ARMPIT of the SLUMS of GALILEE)!

GOD'S PRIORITIES include the POOR, HELPLESS, and HUMBLE. Listen ... LUKE 1:50 = ⁵⁰ *He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him.* ³

We LEARN FROM MARY about GOD'S PRIORITIES according to WHAT God DID for HER and what GOD DID for US ...

#2 = What God Did For US

As MARY continues to SING PRAISES, in the SECOND VERSE she included ALL GOD'S PEOPLE who FEAR HIM! God has SHOWN and WILL SHOW His MERCY to ALL ... it will be NOTICED by THOSE who FEAR / RESPECT / are IN AWE of HIM as The ALMIGHTY GOD. Now LISTEN for the THREE SPECIFIC GROUPS of people GOD has shown MERCY TO ... LUKE 1:51-53 = ⁵¹ *His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.* ⁵² *He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble.* ⁵³ *He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.* ⁴

MARY NOTICED that GOD had PRIORITIZED SOME for HIS MERCY (**Helpless / Humble / Hungry**) ... **#1 = The HELPLESS.** God's MIGHT ARM had HELPED the HELPLESS. Mary's PEOPLE had LONG been OPPRESSED by DIFFERENT NATIONS ... ROME at PRESENT. The people had BEEN DISCOURAGED by their CIRCUMSTANCES, but MARY saw REASON to PRAISE how GOD had BLESSED AMIDST PERSECUTION.

These people were HELPLESS against the SYSTEMS in place, but MARY saw GOD TURNING EVERYTHING UPSIDE DOWN ... through the CHILD INSIDE of HER!

Listen to the UPSIDE DOWN ... The WEAK TAKE THRONES from the MIGHTY, the (**#2**) **HUMBLE** SCATTER the PROUD, NOBODIES are LIFTED UP and MADE KNOWN, the (**#3**) **HUNGRY** are FILLED, and the RICH get POORER. UPSIDE DOWN. And a teenager from NAZARETH is PRAISING GOD for it!

MARY understood, as PAUL later WROTE, that the GRACE of GOD works OPPOSITE to the THOUGHTS and WAYS of the WORLD! 1st CORINTHIANS 1:27-29 = ²⁷ *Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise.* *And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.* ²⁸ *God chose*

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). <https://www.tyndale.com/tyndale-house-publishers>.
² Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). <https://www.tyndale.com/tyndale-house-publishers>.
³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). <https://www.tyndale.com/tyndale-house-publishers>.

things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. ²⁹ *As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.*⁵

GOD's GOD, and WE (including Mary) are NOT! God's THOUGHTS are NOT OUR THOUGHTS, and OUR THOUGHTS are NOT GOD'S THOUGHTS.

MARY UNDERSTOOD this ... Do WE? Do WE understand the NECESSITY of HUMILITY before The ALMIGHTY?

Mary continues to SING ... LUKE 1:54-55 = ⁵⁴ *He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful.* ⁵⁵ *For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever.* ⁶

Even though ISRAEL is CURRENTLY going THROUGH IT (Oppressed) ... GOD will NOT FORGET to be MERCIFUL to THEM. God has NOT FORGOTTEN His PEOPLE ... So, Mary PRAISED GOD for ...

#3 = What God Did For ISRAEL

GOD was ON ISRAEL'S SIDE! Even though it SEEMED that ROME was in CHARGE, Mary RECOGNIZED that GOD STILL WAS. The NATION was still God's SERVANT and God would HELP them CARRY OUT HIS PURPOSE!

GOD'S PURPOSE? To SAVE the PEOPLE of this WORLD from their SINS. MARY KNEW GOD had PROMISED to SEND The MESSIAH through the FAMILY TREE of KING DAVID. Her BETROTHED, JOSEPH, was FROM that TREE! God had been MERCIFUL to His CHOSEN NATION, ISRAEL ... to CARRY OUT HIS PURPOSE! ISRAEL, a FEEBLE NATION by the STANDARDS of the WORLD, had been (and continues to be) RESCUED by GOD through the GENERATIONS BEFORE MARY and JOSEPH ... for a PURPOSE. So, a HUMBLE, POOR, OPPRESSED NATION could be LOVED ON by GOD.

The LEAST and the LOST are the PRIORITIES of GOD! Those who RECOGNIZE they NEED RESCUED and NOT just ASSISTED, are GODS FAVORED! MARY / US / ISRAEL ... None of these GREAT by the WORLDS's STANDARDS, but GOD FLIPS it UPSIDE DOWN! God FAVORS the POOR, HUNGRY, HELPLESS ... makes them HIS PRIORITY. He INVITES US to DO the SAME. Matthew 25 (read it!) REMINDS US that what WE DO for the LEAST, WE DO for JESUS!

LUKE 1:56 = ⁵⁶ *Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.* ⁷ MARY thought DEEPLY about HER OPPORTUNITY to SERVE GOD for the SAKE of the LOST. She PRAISED God and was OBEDIENT to GOD'S COMMANDS.

We have OPPORTUNITIES to DO LIKEWISE ... This Christmas Season ... Interhope ... Match Gifted. WATCH ... (**show video here**).

Let's Pray!

Next Steps: *Memorize 1st Corinthians 1:28-29*
Read Luke 1-2 and 1st Corinthians 1
Invite someone to Worship with you

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). <http://www.tyndale.org>. Tyndale House Publishers.
² Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). <http://www.tyndale.org>. Tyndale House Publishers.
³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). <http://www.tyndale.org>. Tyndale House Publishers.

Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!
In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today

• We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.
It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is HIT "**SEND**" your COMPLETED Connection Card

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As our ushers GET READY to come forward

- I just want to remind you ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... 1st CORINTHIANS 1:27a = ²⁷ *Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise.*
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the first place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- Next Week: **ALL I WANT for CHRISTMAS...**

"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."

Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Warren Wiersbe, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegram for outlines and ideas for this worship series.