

The Song of Mary — December 9 & 10, 2017
Follow-up Bible Studies

Written by Maggie Baxter

Day One: Psalm 98

- Why should we sing a “new song” to the Lord (1-3)? What do you think the writer means by “new song”? In all these reasons to sing to God, which one resonates with you the most? Why?
- Who is called to “shout for joy to the Lord” (4)? What are some of the ways we can make music for God (4-6)? What are some of the ways you usually feel led to worship God with song? How do you think the Lord responds to your praise?
- Describe the psalmist’s invitation to all of creation (7-9). Who are some of the specific invitees (7-9)? How does it feel to know that when you sing to the Lord, the rest of creation joins in?
- Meditate on the last sentence. Compare it to Mary’s song in Luke 1:46-55. In light of Mary’s proclamation, what do you think it will look like for God to “judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity”?

Day Two: Mark 12:41-44

- Set the scene of this text (41). Why do you think Jesus chose to watch people make their offerings? What sort of “upside down kingdom” lessons can be had from observing what different people do with their money?
- Contrast what the rich gave to the treasury with the widow’s offering (41-42). What do you make of this from a purely worldly and numerical standpoint? What about within the framework of Jesus’ “upside down kingdom”?
- After the offering, what did Jesus do (43)? What did he say to his disciples about the widow (43-44)? How is his viewpoint different than a worldly one? Pray, asking Jesus to reveal to you those he commends. How can you join him in esteeming people of the “upside down kingdom”?

Day Three: Luke 9:46-48

- What happened among the disciples (46)? Why do you think they got into this argument? Recall times you’ve engaged in similar disputes - perhaps in childhood, with a sibling, or on a sports team. What drove you? Imagine what it would be like to instead argue about who is the lowest.
- Though not part of the conversation, what knowledge did Jesus have of the situation (47)? Reflect on what your thoughts have been like today. What do you think they conveyed to Jesus?
- With knowledge of the disciples’ thoughts, what did Jesus do (47)? What did he say (48)? When arguing about who’s the greatest, you’re probably not thinking about how to welcome the lowly, such as culturally undervalued children, into God’s kingdom. Describe the way Jesus wants to transform our thoughts on status. Pray that you too can accept his offer to begin thinking in an “upside down kingdom” sort of way.

Day Four: Romans 8:31-39

- What rhetorical questions does Paul pose (31, 33-34)? Since “God is for us,” what does this say about how he will free us from oppression (32)? In what ways are you struggling to believe this? Ask the Lord to grow your faith in this regard.

- While at the right hand of God, what is Jesus doing (34)? Picture this scene in your mind's eye: right now, Jesus is praying for you! Say something to God about this. Perhaps even sing it out.
- Summarize Paul's writing on our sure and protected access to the love of Christ (35-39). Even in hardship we can experience God's goodness and love. Today, what encouragement does this offer to you? What other spiritual practices provide reassurance when you're enduring trials? If there's a certain worship song that fits the bill, sing it to God now.

Day Five: Ephesians 5:15-20

- How should we live (15-16)? Why (16)? In what ways do you "make the most of every opportunity"? When are you least likely to? Instead of being foolish, what understanding should we seek (17)? Ask God for wisdom, discernment and self-discipline. How would greater ability in these areas improve your life?
- What are two options people have for filling themselves up (18)? Perhaps you've experienced both; how would you compare them? What pours out of a person who's filled with the Holy Spirit (19-20)? What tends to pour out of you when you're filled with the Spirit? Thank God for his indwelling and overflow in your life.
- Imagine singing spiritual truth to someone in order to bring encouragement. Then, the person joins you in song. Today, when singing is no longer the commonplace activity it once was, how would this make you feel? Pray God would use you to restore to humanity the many benefits of song.