

Meditation/monologue

Magnificat Counterpoint – Easter Reprise

This meditation/monologue has been consciously written as a second part to our Christmas [Magnificat Counterpoint – the story behind Mary’s song](#) (also available as a [spoken word](#) resource). But it also stands alone. Whilst the first meditation seeks to capture Mary looking forward, at the moment of Jesus’ conception, this one imagines her at the end of her life, looking back at the whole of her life with him, and after him... and how her song, and all God’s other words to and through her, have come true – and just what her life of praise and obedience helped to enable...

What a life God has given me! What a life...

Part of me is still just that young peasant girl from Nazareth. But I...

I... I?

I have also been God’s son’s... *mother!*

How can I explain the unexplainable?

You see, everything the angel and the prophets said became techni-colour truth.

No word from God ever fails. Not a single sentence can ever come back empty of course.

But I actually *watched* it happen, everything heard and sung about... I watched it become flesh and deed and fact.

My life has been part of the greatest story ever imagined, lived or told...

I *did* find favour with God.

I *did* conceive and give birth to a son.

I *did* call him Jesus.

The Holy Spirit *really did* overshadow me and the one who was born in, and through and from me *was his* son – the Son of God himself.

My beautiful, broken-hearted barren cousin *did* have a child in her old age who changed everything for her. And who – even in the womb – recognised the Lord beginning to grow in me.

Beautiful, 24-7 worshipping old Anna the prophetess *did* see and speak the truth, when her soft wrinkled smile shone on him knowingly. How could her God-perceiving heart *not* see with crystal clarity? The One only to be accessed one day a year by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies was being carried into the outer courts in baby-crinkled skin!

Messiah *was* here – with us! He *did come*. *For us* – to redeem Jerusalem; to redeem *the whole world*.

Simeon *did* see God's salvation. He held it in his very arms, gathering it close to him as his over-flowing heart burst out praise there and then in the temple courts. Like me, he cradled the one who had been clothed in the cosmos ... the light of the world – revelation for the gentiles of every nation, the cornerstone and crowning glory of the people of Israel!

And as he grew up? Well, Simeon was right. Many in Israel *did* rise and fall because of Jesus; many hearts *did* reveal their true thoughts by speaking against God's living sign.

And a sword *did* pierce my heart.

It was when we were running away from Bethlehem that I first thought those words were coming true. Because Joseph's dream was right; we did need to flee Herod's anger and violence. And the terrible thought of what might happen to the little one who was *my* everything – *God's* everything.

But that wasn't it.

Then later, on a long road home from Jerusalem when I realised my twelve year old boy was missing, a freezing fear of separation sliced through my core again. But that wasn't it either. Not even a foreshadowing of it.

I thought again I was tasting it when his ministry was in full swing and he was away saying things I didn't understand, making enemies out of powerful people and putting friends, strangers and outcasts ahead of his own family... right from that first public miracle in Cana when he said his time had not come to the day he would not come out to see me and his brothers away.

But even all of this was not it.

I knew that when his time *really* came.

Oh yes, then I knew. It is coming now... the sword is falling and I do not know if I will bear its devastation...

When he didn't use his powers at all but surrendered himself to slander, betrayal and capture.

When they chose to free Barabbas – *Barabbas?* – instead of him.

When Pilate washed his hands.

I could see it starting to fall as if in slow motion, with a kind of debilitating, disbelieving clarity.

When they took my son – *God's* son - who had done nothing wrong and everything right ... who had loved people and preached truth and justice and healed, rescued and poured out compassion on the outsider, lived perfect righteousness and exposed hypocrisy and exploitation and hard hearts towards God and man.

When they took him and beat him, and hung him on a cross to die a cursed death between two criminals with a crown of thorns rammed on his head and a mocking sign inadvertently proclaiming the truth – "Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum; Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews".

When he handed me into John's care.

When the life I had once surrendered my whole imagined life for was taken and brutally killed in front of me.

When I realised that it was not just the angel's words, or Simeon's or Anna's that were coming true, but Isaiah's too...

For like a sheep he was led to the slaughter – he didn't even open his mouth to protest. I watched him become a man of sorrows, familiar with everyone's grief. I witnessed him be despised and rejected – betrayed by one of the very people he had put even above family... cheered on into death by the very people who had cheered him into the city a few days earlier, by people he had healed and delivered.

And the punishment that should have been theirs; the punishment that should have been ours – oh God, even *mine* – was all put on his one set of shoulders. Oh God, how could my son's back be broad enough to bear the weight of the whole world's sin? How could his nail-pierced hands hold the agony of carrying it all? How could the purest Son of God carry every foul thing that separates us from his Father?

And then...

... it fell.

The pain of that blade sunk deep, white-hot deep, into my core.

Despair.

Excruciating. Total. Despair.

Separation.

Black-can't-breathe-horror.

Son severed from mother.

Son severed from Father God.

God severed from his very own self.

Earth breaking.

Created order quaking.

Balance crumbling and spirit shaking.

Dark in day and splitting stone and the sacred temple veil severed in two. Because there was an even deeper, cosmic severing happening that none of us foresaw too.

But I didn't know that on that black, black afternoon.

Then, I knew only the sword. Only the searing pain. Only the darkness and the tears and the indescribable wrenching, anguished loss of the loveliest life ever lived.

Thank God for that first, glorious, Resurrection Sunday!

Praise his mighty name for the restoration of all that is good and holy!

Exalt the Lord our God because the Son rose again with the sunrise!

And he has conquered death and fear and shame!

Thank God Jesus' death was not his end – that it was not *my* end – but *everyone's* new beginning!

“Oh my soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.”

For I *have* seen the humblest of all lifted high... on a cross, out of death, and into the heavens!

I *have* seen the hungry filled with good things... on hillsides and in their hearts and spirits...

I *have* seen his arm perform mighty deeds and then the most mighty of all – giving his life as a ransom for many.

And I *have* seen a great mercy extending to every generation in Israel's lineage and outside of it.

Oh Jesus, son of my heart and Son of the living God. All praise to you my risen and reigning Lord! You lived our life, washed our feet, died our death, paid our dues, stormed our hell to win our freedom, and ascended to glory to make a way for us there again. For all of eternity!

So oh yes, I'm still praising you God that I said yes to you when Gabriel asked me to give up my life for yours.

Because what a life – what *life* – you have given us all in exchange! Resurrection, eternal, rich and joyful life.

Love for Jew and Gentile, love to least and most

love to distant islands and love to far off coasts.

Love for every generation, stretching out to kingdom come

Love that freely offers redemption to *every* mother's son.

And so my hand rests here, remembering the first signs of your miracle growth – and knowing you live in me again now!

And I listen. And I obey. And I pray and I praise. And I gladly, daily, *still* risk my everything for your costly grace.

For your life *means* life. Forever.

Yes your life *brings* life. For *everyone*.

And despite that sword, people will *still* always call me blessed.

Because the one who reigns over us all –

chose to need my heartfelt YES!