

# THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

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Today is Wednesday, December 4 and we are in the season of Advent. This week we are studying the songs of Elizabeth and Mary recorded in the Gospel of Luke.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Holy and Loving God, my heart is full of joy as I begin the season of Advent anticipating the celebration of the birth of Your Son, our savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. As a new day begins, I come to this quiet place and pause to rest in Your presence. I breathe deeply, still my mind and focus on the words of these two beautiful women - Mary the mother of Jesus and her cousin Elizabeth. Let me hear the message you have for me today through the words of these ancient songs. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name." Luke 1:46-49 (ESV)***

## REFLECTION

After Elizabeth speaks, the action stops. There is a pause and then Mary bursts into song. In response to Elizabeth's blessing, Mary sings. Like a beautiful aria, the Magnificat (named for the first words in Latin, my soul "magnifies" the Lord), one of the most beloved Songs of Christmas, explodes onto the scene. This young, poor, unwed, pregnant teenager, overlooked in her society, is given voice and proclaims one of the most important prophetic truths in all history. Mary praises God for what God has done and for what God will do. Her soul magnifies and extols the Lord.

What does it mean for a soul to "magnify" God? Is that possible? I am struck by this idea of Mary magnifying God. The original word means: "to enlarge, amplify, to manifest to an extraordinary degree." I think that is a beautiful concept each of us can participate in during this Advent season. Think about it. What would it mean for your soul to magnify God? Your soul enlarges God. Your soul amplifies God. Your soul manifests God to an extraordinary degree.

There are times when someone or something is magnified or amplified in our lives. When we fall in love, get married, plan a vacation, have a baby, start a new job, move to a new home. Times when someone we love is injured or sick, when we have a health scare or receive a diagnosis. Times when relationships are fractured and marriages are struggling.

When these things happen in our lives they take center stage. We put our focus and energy in that direction. We plan a wedding, prepare the nursery, pack all we own in boxes and book the movers, spend time at the hospital, start a new exercise plan, go to marriage counseling. For

better or worse, at particular times in our lives, certain things are magnified—which makes everything else seem small in comparison.

In a similar manner, perhaps that is what it means to “magnify” God. It is when God takes center stage, when He is our top priority, when He is the most important thing in our lives, when we focus all of our energy and attention on Him. Then everything else in our lives begins to seem small in comparison. Maybe that is what it means to magnify God.

So this first week of Advent, as we read Mary’s Song, the Magnificat, consider what it would mean to magnify God in your life. Whatever else is going on, endeavor to keep God front and center. Magnify Him and celebrate His goodness. Amplify His love and share it with the people around you. Be magnanimous and pour out your love generously to God and others.

**Ask:** How might I, like Mary, magnify God today? How can I generously share His blessings, love and goodness with the people around me?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy and mighty God, I lift up my heart to You, I lift up my life to You, my soul magnifies You and my spirit rejoices in You. You are my Savior and Lord. You have blessed me and You have done great things for me. Your name is holy, Your love is steadfast, Your grace is abundant and Your mercy overflows. I praise You and thank You. Teach me what it means to share Your love, amplify Your goodness, and multiply Your blessings in the lives of those around me. Amen.*