Text: Luke 1:39-56

**Introduction**

It really is a gorgeous melancholy tune. Lord Cornwallis had the fife and drum play the then popular tune “The World Turned Upside Down” at Yorktown. And yes, the killjoys that always seem to appear say that it’s playing is apocryphal. But everything about it seems right. It’s an old English drinking and protest song from the 1640 in the midst of Cavaliers and Roundheads and Oliver Cromwell, Parliament passed what became called “The Christmas Ban.” Although not really aimed at banning Christmas itself, aimed more at banning its overwhelming celebration. Think a Boar’s Head Festival and the 12 days of Christmas with plenty of drinking and everything that goes with it. The words convey the sense of just how wrong it seems for King and Gentry to try and quash Christmas. Everything good rushed out and The World Turned Upside Down. The same unimaginable fact of the greatest Army in the world losing to colonials who managed to win the war while losing almost all the battles. The World had not seen something like Washington at Yorktown or the Crownless state founded since antiquity. The World Turned Upside Down.

**Trouble in the World**

The core of today’s Gospel reading might be the original version of The World Turned Upside Down. Mary’s Song – the Magnificat.

Whether you call it a religious quest, or true religion or any of the other words the feeling goes by. The way of the world assumes that man seeks God. You offer the appropriate sacrifices and hope that god or the gods are pleased. Or at least content enough not to cause you problems. You pray for the gods favor. You pilgrimage to the holy sites they might be found. You build monuments and markers for those along the same path. Here I found him. This is the noble path. This is the hero’s quest. We love this story so much we tell it over and over again. Even down until today. Every movie is warmed over Joseph Campbell and the Hero with a Thousand Faces. The best selling books are all forms of self-help. You too can find god, in whatever form you want, if you follow this path I’ve blazed for you. And this has always been the way of the world.

The problem with that way is nobody ever really found god. They might have found something they called that. They might have found a good enough substitute. Got rich along the way. Or just run out of energy. Or maybe developed or adopted a philosophy of skepticism that exempted them from the quest.

The way of the world is that man moves to God. The cruelty of this is that man can never reach god. The ancients had their stories of mortals made gods, and the divinization of great men, but Alexander and Caesar were just as dead. Neither having what they most desired. Finding that it fell through even their great reach.

**Gospel in the Text**

And I’m going to use the Old Testament name for God here on purpose. The Jews never found Yahweh. They weren’t looking for him. They often would go off on the world’s quest finding the Baals and the High Places. Yahweh has always been different. You couldn’t seek him. He drew near to you. And the World Turned Upside Down.

Rich old Abram was sitting in Haran – the endpoint of his father Terah’s quest. And he probably would have been content to spend his days there, with Sarai and Lot as his heir. But Yahweh draws near and tells him to leave and gives him a promise. It is not the religious quest. Because it was not a search for God. God had drawn near to Abram. And his world turned upside down.

My favorite verse of the bible is another moment like this. Imagine being Jacob and having grown up around Abraham and Isaac and known about the promise. Rebekah his mom surely told him that he was the heir of the promise as she commanded Jacob and hoodwinked her blind husband. But it never sank in as he is on the run from his brother. And that is when Yahweh drew near. It’s Jacob’s ladder. And God comes near with the promise. “Behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go.” And Jacob awakes and shouts, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” The World Turned Upside Down. Jacob’s life is far from the hero’s journey. It’s one bumbling plot after another. But Yahweh was faithful.

You can work you way through the entire Old Testament. You don’t find Yahweh. Yahweh draws near to you. And the World Turns Upside Down. Kingdoms rise and fall. Armies encircle you, and are struck down over night. The least of the tribe are chose again and again. Because Yahweh does not draw near to the Alexanders and Caesars and all those the world recognizes as the winners of the quest. Yahweh draws near to humble. To the poor in spirit. And Turns the World Upside Down.

None more so than the blessed virgin Mary. God drew near to hear, nearer than any other of mankind. She was not on some quest. The world would never have known her name. Yet the Archangel Gabriel lauds her. And Elizabeth, her higher status relative, recognizes what has come – “why is it granted to me that the mother of my LORD should come to me?” The LORD drew near. And the world turns upside down.

“He looked on my humble estate, and from now on all generations will call me blessed.”

“ The proud are scattered int eh thoughts of their hearts, the mighty cast down, the humble exalted. The hungry are filled with good things, and the rich sent away empty.”

Just as he spoke to our father, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

The World is Turned Upside Down.

God has drawn near and become man. We do not need to seek him, because God has come to us. He has come to us in this approachable form. And baby born in a manger. Nothing about him to call attention. Nothing other than the Word. Today, the Kingdom draws near to you.

**Gospel in the World**

Today, your World is turned upside down.

Because the promises are all yours. You are the heir of the promise. Your sins are forgiven. You have an eternal inheritance. You have a mansion made for you in the New Jerusalem.

God has drawn near to you. And he promises to be with you all your days. Wherever you go.

The world wants us to think that nothing good can ever come to us. You must go out and conquer it. You have to prove worthy of it.

But Christ draws near to the humble. He scatters our proud thoughts that we could ever find god. He sends away those who think they have all they need.

All the ways of the world are turned upside down with Christ coming to us. Coming to the undeserving. Coming to the tired. Coming to the despairing. Coming to the hungry. Christ comes to us offering himself as our strength and hope and food.

The question of the Magnificat is what kind of soul are we.

Are we the soul still crusading for by the ways of the world? Do we think god is at the end of the road? At the end of the quest?

Or has your world been turned upside down? Have Christ drawn near. And in everything we do, our soul magnifies what God has already done? Our spirit rejoice in his salvation?

Has your soul been made full in the promise, or are you still walking the way of the world?

God draws near, which way do you go?