

E17 Extra Shot | Mary the Magnificat | Debbie Blue (Repost)

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Debbie Blue, Unknown, Blake Smith

Blake Smith 00:09

Hey, Faith Unfiltered Podcast listeners. This is Blake Smith, Project Manager for Faith Unfiltered Podcast. As part of this Advent season, we thought we'd bring back an episode that originally aired on December 23, 2016, and it is a sermon by Debbie Blue, who is an author. And she is the author of a book called, Magnificat, a God Who Never Stopped Considering Women. This is her sermon on the Magnificat. We hope you enjoy.

Unknown 00:42

Tonight's reading is from the Gospel of Luke chapter one, verses 39 through 56 in those days, Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the Hill Country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me, for as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord and Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely from now on, all generations will call me blessed for the Mighty One has done great things for me. And holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation, he has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever. And Mary remained with her about three months and then return to her own. This is the word of the Lord you

Debbie Blue 03:09

I'm not sure if it's the marketing efforts of the church or some more Craven, subconscious impulse embedded in patriarchy, but it seems like something is out there conspiring to take the edge off, Mary, the Mother of God. I mean, here's a character that comes on stage belting out this intensely revolutionary song, a song about the upheaval of the established order. A song the Russian czars didn't

like being sung in mass because it terrified them. Send the rich empty away. A song the Archbishop of Canterbury told his missionaries to India not to read in public, because in a country with such poverty, it might incite riots take down the mighty and yet, does Mary ever really even get A good line in a nativity play? In manger scenes and Christmas songs and American iconography, she is tepid and silent and bland and always in that blue dress. Why not a balaclava or something a little more piratey, maybe, or just an expression on her face. This is the woman who carries God in her womb. So the story goes, this is the mother who gives birth to God. There's a lot under the surface in the Bible here, I mean barely under the surface really, from the beginning of time, when humans first started making things. They carved, molded, fired, whittled, wove, images of what we've come to call fertility goddesses, the strongest religious manifestation of the ancient world, pretty much everywhere, the Great Mother Goddess, she was there in the beginning of the Hebrew religion. You can see her traces all over the Bible, the feminine face of God, the Queen of Heaven. El Shaddai, usually translated, the Almighty God can also be translated the one of the breast. I know which way I'd go. You know, the God of love and mercy for all people isn't really expressed all that well by a number or a gender. One is more like two, for example, than it is like God. Language fails. But God is assuredly not one old man in the sky with a beard. God may be one or rather three in one, but God is not a monolith, a stone structure intractably indivisible and uniform, a monoculture, wiping out biodiversity. Who wants one person monopolizing a conversation or a monopoly one entity with exclusive possession or control over something, a mono carpet plant flowers and bears fruit only once, monochromatic, one color, mono tone, dull repetition, lack of variety and style, manner of color. I could go on and on. Still, some people editing the text formed a religion trying to make sure monotheism got a good hold. It's understandable, but in the process, they wiped out any traces of the mother goddess. She seemed like a threat to monotheism, considering all the efforts, all the efforts made to eradicate her, it is astonishing, I think, beautiful, wild that in the story of the gospel of Jesus Christ, right off, first thing, God becomes incarnate through the womb of the mother. The institution had been trying to get rid of the beloved mother forever, and here she is in Luke chapter one, the pregnant mother birthing God, a powerless teenage girl overcome unwillingly by the Spirit of God, I don't think so, a subversive revolutionary who somehow makes her way into the Vatican, onto the mantels of fundamentalist households in Texas and Tennessee. I think maybe that's more like it. It's really amazing to survey how Mary has appeared over time all across the world, what she means to people she is loved and venerated by Muslims as much as Catholics. She is a Black Madonna of Brazil, mother of the excluded, condemner of slavery in Poland. She is known as the Queen of workers. I'm not kidding, union leader, maybe some black boots and a union patch. As a mother of all across Latin America, she led the movements of people seeking liberation from oppression. Over and over again, she is Guadalupe, the indigenous goddess who convinces a Catholic church to make her the patron saint of Mexico, a vital revolutionary image of resistance to colonization and genocide. There's a Sufi order that names itself after Mary and emphasizes the divine feminine. She is Our Lady of Sorrows, mercy, solitude, comfort, miracles, stars light, the daughter of Zion, seed of wisdom, refuge of sinners, mirror of justice, Queen of Peace, mystical rose. She's the queen of the forests in a syncretist Brazilian jungle religion where they drink. At the Ayahuasca some people might think she never really got a handle on the whole branding thing. You can't pin her down. She certainly doesn't have one simple identity. What kind of people want to make themselves into a brain. There isn't much monolith, monotone, mono culture or monotony with Mary, though they've tried in many, many ways, the authorities simply cannot regulate her. She shows up in France, in Ireland, Rwanda, Egypt and Wisconsin, of all places, I love that she appeared to three poor peasant children in a town in

Portugal named after Muhammad's daughter, Fatima. Fatima was Muhammad's most beloved child, the one said to resemble him most with her kindness and generosity, Fatima is revered in Islam almost as much as Mary, the mother of Jesus, is revered in Islam. I love that we have this juxtaposition of juxtaposition of words, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady, meaning Christians, Lady of Fatima, the shining one of Islam, all in one breath, Muslim pilgrims pray next to Christian pilgrims at Our Lady of Fatima's shrine. Maybe truth isn't always exactly a scientific assembly of verifiable facts, as much as truth is a move toward love, toward loving relationship, God, loving mercy, shalom, salaam the mother who loves all of her children and wants to keep them talking. The lady has a way with that sort of a thing, creating portals, building bridges, illuminating cracks in the walls instead of fortifying them. She is not a brand. She is the Mediatrix, the builder of bridges, the blur of lines through our faith so often follow the guiding visions of the fathers the women. Take us different places. They stretch the lines. They open things up. They take us outside the firm foundation, the strict boundaries of tradition. Instead of guarding the borders carefully, we need to find holes in the fences that divide us. And Mary, it seems like she will show up pretty much anywhere, everywhere. She's been spotted on a grilled cheese sandwich in the Chicago suburbs, on a pizza pan in Houston, a pretzel, a lump of firewood, a felled tree in New Jersey, a fence in Australia, Australia, she's been sighted in Cheetos, tortillas, chipatas, tea and dental X rays. We might find these sort of appearances questionable, silly. They are certainly not apparitions officially approved by the Roman Catholic Church, but it might be just like her to show up for the Kooks and the crackpots and the crazies for the hungry, for the starved and the uncouth, the rich and The well educated are sent empty away and the poor receive their blessing, far from being imposed on a reluctant laity by an authoritarian regime, belief in Marian apparitions has often as not been imposed from below on the ecclesiastical authorities. I like that taking down the mighty from their thrones. Mary is black. Mary is Mexican. Sometimes she's lily white too. I saw a great image of Our Lady of Guadalupe with boxing gloves and a bikini on whenever, wherever and however she is, though she is unfailingly true to her song, she comes for the poor and the sick and the wounded, for the mothers who have lost children, for the tired and the oppressed. I'm not sure that you can say the same for how things have played out with the almighty Father. I love that. Che Guevara said, The revolution is guided by great feelings, feelings. Che Guevara of love. This sounds like the mother. Of course, God is not mother or father. God is not male or female. God is not cis, I, B, T OR Q. All we have are inadequate, if often, beautiful metaphors, God is a lily, a rose, Dew, wind and fire. God is a mother bear and a lion. On the other hand, God is not a lion, but a lamb. God is not in the fire or the wind, but in a still small voice, God is a fighter. God gives birth. This proliferation of metaphors in the Bible might lead us to believe God is more like many things than one thing. We don't know exactly what we're talking about when we talk about God, this is a very important insight to retain God is not sitting on a throne that our systems build. God is much more lively than static, more rambunctious than monotonous, more mother, father lover than something very uniform or formulaic, a riotous sort of proliferation of blooms, more than a monoculture. I think that it may not be the year for the flashy God Almighty Father, thin skinned patriarch, who insists that people worship him. Maybe a little more mother love as we start the new year, a little more subverting of the established Order. Maybe God's body, round and capacious given for you.