



## SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

"Two Women's Crisis" | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | December 19, 2021

### **Ecclesiastes 7:2-6**

It is better to go to the house of mourning  
than to go to the house of feasting,  
for this is the end of all mankind,  
and the living will lay it to heart.  
3 Sorrow is better than laughter,  
for by sadness of face the heart is made glad.  
4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,  
but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.  
5 It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise  
than to hear the song of fools.  
6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot,  
so is the laughter of the fools;  
this also is vanity.

### **Hebrews 10:5-10**

"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body have you prepared for me;  
6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.  
7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,  
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"  
8 When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken  
pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and  
sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), 9 then  
he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does  
away with the first in order to establish the second. 10 And  
by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of  
the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

### **Luke 1:34-45, 56**

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a  
virgin?" 35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will  
come upon you, and the power of the Most High will  
overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called  
holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth  
in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth  
month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be  
impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the  
servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."  
And the angel departed from her.

39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill  
country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she entered the house of  
Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth  
heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.  
And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she  
exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this  
granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to  
me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to  
my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And  
blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment  
of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

56 And Mary remained with her about three months and  
returned to her home.

### **Key Points and Discussion Questions from Tim's Sermon:**

#### **Introductory Exercise**

Tim asks us to consider "what meaning can a story like this one about Mary and Elizabeth hold for us amid "the surge and sweep of such mighty events before our eyes?" Take a moment to share with each other how you personally are feeling amid the present "surge and sweep" of the mighty events we are experiencing right now. Pray for your time together to temporarily divest yourselves of these anxieties so that your discussion together can sink in deeply to your hearts and lives.

#### **Sermon Discussion**

Tim builds his reflection on Mary and Elizabeth around two main points - barrenness and abandonment.

1. Tim pointed out that "barrenness in the house of morning" is a major theme in the bible. What stories or instances do we see barrenness take center stage in the Scripture? Why is this such an important theme? Why is it important that we acknowledge it?
2. Tim points out that Mary's life appears to be going quite well before God arrives on the scene; but, when God does arrive, everything gets thrown into disarray. What did he mean by this?
3. Reflect and share. How has God "arrived on the scene" in your life to throw you plans into chaos? Going further: in what ways might he be disrupting your plans right now?
4. What does it say about our God that he would put Mary into a place of such tremendous social risk? What can we expect from Him as His followers?
5. Tim lauds Mary's response to the precarious place in which God had placed her, calling it an act of abandonment. In what way is he using the word "abandonment?"
6. Meditate. Choose one person to slowly read aloud Luke 1: 34-38 while everyone else closes their eyes and imagines themselves watching this intimate moment between Mary and God as if you were "a fly on the wall."
  - How did you feel towards Mary as she was given the news that she was about to become pregnant with God's son?
  - How do you feel towards Mary as you listened to her response?
  - Discuss an aspect of your life where Mary's act of abandonment needs to be your inspiration and example?
7. Read verses 39 and following again.
  - Why do you think Mary "moved with haste?"
  - Discuss the importance of this time for both Mary and Elizabeth.
  - Reflect: what relationships has God supplied to you to help you through your present trials and challenges? What relationships do you need to pursue "with haste" to help you right now?

Closing: Imagine how Mary and Elizabeth would have prayed for one another in their three months together . . . and do likewise!