

Luke 1:57-79

Pastor Jim Thomas

December 4, 2022



SERMON NOTES

Four Canticle Portraits by Kim Thomas

"The four canticle portraits were originally commissioned in 2016 for the Getty Christmas Tour and used on stages as their backdrop. To communicate an image that would read in a large hall, I simplified the portraits by representing them in linoleum block prints. The context required the artwork be narrow and tall, so with all of these givens, I tried to capture something for each of the four in their faces, as well as show the posture of their heart through their hands."

Zechariah's Song

"Zechariah is told by an angel that he and his Elizabeth would give birth to a son who would be John the Baptist. When Zechariah responds in doubt because of their aged and barren state, he is struck speechless by the angel Gabriel until the birth of the child. I've portrayed Zechariah as surrendering his voice to God by his open mouth and lifted hands."

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come to His people and redeemed them."

- Luke 1:68 (NIV)

Good News of Great Joy

The Songs of Advent



"Christmas is the day of songs, for on this day the music of eternity came into time."

- George Eliot, *The Christmas Canticles*

The 4 Songs of Advent

- Song of Mary: Luke 1:26-55
- Song of Zechariah: Luke 1:57-79
- Song of the Angels: Luke 2:1-14
- Song of Simeon: Luke 2:21-38

Zachariah's Song: The Symphony of Salvation

Luke 1:5-25; 57-80

1. Declares the greatness of God
2. Describes the goodness of God
3. Delights in the grace of God

“What’s truly amazing about the Christian faith is the idea that the God who made the universe from quarks to galaxies also cares enough about us to be born as a human and to suffer and die to bring forgiveness and new life to broken people.”

- Professor Jonathon Feng, Distinguished Professor of Physics & Astronomy at the University of California Irvine

“If I am concerned about the vital matter of salvation, then, whether I like it or not, there is no evading what seem to be the exotic surroundings in which it is brought to my notice. Angels, predictions, miracles, are an intrinsic part of the gospel, because it concerns a supernatural break-in to our world, as unexpected as the message to Zachariah, and as staggering as the one to Mary.”

- Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Luke*

“The greatness of God rouses fear within us, but His goodness encourages us not to be afraid of Him. To fear and not be afraid — that is the paradox of faith.”

- A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

“George Buttrick, former chaplain at Harvard, recalls that students would come into his office, plop down on a chair and declare, ‘I don’t believe in God.’ Buttrick would give this disarming reply: ‘Sit down and tell me what kind of God you don’t believe in. I probably don’t believe in that God either.’ And then he would talk about Jesus, the corrective to all our assumptions about God.”

- Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*

- **Zachariah** = Yah remembers
- **Elisabet** = God is my oath
- **John** = Yah has been gracious

“God regularly works through ordinary people, doing what they normally do, who with a mixture of half-faith and devotion are holding themselves ready for whatever God has in mind.”

- N.T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*

“Gospel narratives are telling you not what you should do but what God has done. The birth of the son of God into the world is a gospel, good news, an announcement. You don’t save yourself. God has come to save you.”

- Tim Keller, *Hidden Christmas*