

## **“The Song of Elizabeth” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Advent Midweek 2 December 11, 2024**

- I. **The Song of Elizabeth** – Luke 1:39-45 – previously read
- II. **Perhaps you’ve heard of a “zero-sum game”.**
  - a. A zero-sum game is when one person wins, the other guy loses.
    - i. That sounds kind of funny, but the point is that it is never a win-win – it is always one person wins at the expense of the other.
  - b. In our sinful hearts, we often look at others with coveting in our hearts – in other words, if my neighbor gets the glory, I am losing... and I don’t like it.
    - i. In a sinful world, we don’t want anyone else to get the glory.
  - c. In fact, society has a bunch of unwritten rules trying to keep us from taking glory that belongs to others.
    - i. We use phrases like “Don’t upstage him” or “Quit stealing her thunder.”
    - ii. This is why women other than the bride aren’t supposed to wear white at the wedding.
      1. It’s also why it would be frowned upon for someone to propose at a wedding reception and take the focus off the newlyweds.
    - iii. It’s why you don’t start bragging about all you’ve accomplished in your career at another person’s retirement ceremony.
    - iv. It’s why a young woman shouldn’t announce her pregnancy at her friend’s baby shower.
  - d. And yet, that last thing is what the virgin Mary does when she greets her cousin Elizabeth.
    - i. Granted, Elizabeth may not exactly be having a bridal shower at this moment.
    - ii. But her whole pregnancy is like a celebration for a couple reasons.
      1. First of all, Elizabeth is far too old to be having children, not to mention she was considered barren her whole life – just like the story of Sarah from Sarah and Abraham.
      2. Second, she knows from the angel Gabriel telling her husband Zechariah that her baby will be a prophet – and after 300 years of no prophets in Israel – it’s a big deal.
    - iii. So, this is all pretty amazing... It’s like a spotlight shining directly on Elizabeth at this point...
      1. It’s like a musical where this is her moment to sing a song of glory about all the good that God has done for her.
  - e. Although our reading doesn’t explicitly say this, but it seems that Mary already let Elizabeth know the angel Gabriel visited her to say she was giving birth to whom? The Christ... the Messiah... the Savior of the world!
    - i. Imagine Mary going into Elizabeth’s bridal shower, grabbing the microphone and singing, “My pregnancy is even more miraculous

than yours, and my baby is going to be even more important than your baby!”

III. **Yet, with God’s glory, there is enough to go around for everyone.**

- a. Instead of being filled with sorrow or jealousy or covetousness, Elizabeth is filled with joy.
  - i. You see, she was a believer, and that means all her life she looked forward to the promise of salvation that was right there in front of her growing in Mary’s womb.
  - ii. Elizabeth doesn’t see her loss because of Mary’s gain – she doesn’t want to grab the microphone and sing her own praises – She sees God’s amazing work and wants to sing with Mary.
- b. “When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy’” (vv 41–44).
  - i. Elizabeth realizes that Mary’s baby brings her glory too!
  - ii. She knows that her baby, John the Baptist leaped for joy in her womb when Mary and the unborn Jesus came near.
  - iii. It was Elizabeth’s humility showing when she asks, “Why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”
  - iv. Elizabeth gladly gives the spotlight to Mary, because she knows that the baby in Mary’s womb will be her salvation.

IV. **Unfortunately, we don’t always think like Elizabeth.**

- a. It’s so hard for us to be happy about others receiving glory and honor.
  - i. We would rather they receive a small amount, or at least be very humble about it and not make it a big deal.
  - ii. We buy into the world’s understanding that if anyone receives too much, they need to stop it and spread it around to others.
- b. Even when Jesus and His Word demand the spotlight, we don’t want to give it up...
  - i. When Christ and His Word come into our presence, saying, “Look, Jesus is here to forgive you... to heal your broken heart... to give you the gift eternal life... so put away your pride and sin, and come home to the arms of Jesus.”
  - ii. So many times, we don’t give God the glory... to listen to Him... but we are stuck in the loop of pride and selfishness.
    - 1. We trust in our own power and self-sufficiency rather than the one who gave it to us.
    - 2. We break down the people around us because we can’t stand to see them take the glory that could be ours.

3. We basically tell Jesus, “I don’t really care how good Your news is... I’m the most important one, and this my moment in the spotlight.”

- V. **I’m here to say that it’s not our moment, but our glory starts with Jesus.**
- a. Our very lives belong to Jesus, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and became the most important Person to ever live.
    - i. The beauty of Jesus is that He is so humble, that we can imagine the heavenly spotlight shining brightly on Him, but He grabs us and brings us into His glory to share it.
    - ii. He did not come into the world to steal the spotlight, but to bring all people into the light.
  - b. As I said last week, Elizabeth’s child would grow up to be John the Baptist, the one who would prepare the way for the Savior...
    - i. For a time, the spotlight seemed to be on John, but what did he even say, “He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.” (Luke 3:16)
    - ii. John the Baptist would soon see Jesus and proclaim, “Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)
    - iii. Yes, the little baby in Mary’s womb would be born to grow up into a sacrificial lamb – as the nails pierced His hands and feet – as blood poured down His body – the spotlight was on Him alone.
  - c. All glory, honor, and praise belongs to Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer of the world – that all who believe in Him might not perish but have eternal life.
    - i. That is the most amazing part of God’s love for us, that while being God and deserving all glory, He shares it with us.
    - ii. Nothing we do takes the spotlight from Him... because it is all His... but He chooses to share His grace and glory with us.
  - d. Jesus did the work of setting us all free –
    - i. Free from the pride that grabs the spotlight...
    - ii. Free from the selfishness that wants to be important...
    - iii. And free from the sin that wants to glorify us.
  - e. Elizabeth sang, “Blessed is Mary among all women, and blessed is the fruit of her womb.”
    - i. Now we can sing that song too, because the Christ Child, the Lamb of God, has made us blessed.
    - ii. He’s washed us clean, given us salvation, and shown us that we don’t have a God who competes for glory, but freely shares it... because there is enough to go around for everyone. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sermon based on: “The Nativity: Songs of God and Men”, series by Rev. Hans W. Fiene, Copyright © 2024 Concordia Publishing House