**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes 12-25-2022
The Ultimate Christmas Playlist**

One of the things that is often joyfully debated each year is when to begin playing and listening to Christmas songs. For some, the moment Halloween is over and we enter November, Christmas music is fair game to be played. For others, you have to get through Thanksgiving first. For still others, you do not start until at least reaching December.

But one thing most everyone can agree on is that music and song are powerful. Music can impact us in very deep ways. It is just the way that God wired us.

This is why it is so important to put good and godly music into our minds. The music and the songs that we listen to, we unknowingly are inviting to shape us in some way. Just as what we choose to eat impacts our health as well.

Friends, through the season of Advent and now here on Christmas Day, we have been exploring what each of the gospels can teach us about Christmas. Today, on Christmas Day, we are privileged to listen to some of the songs that came out of the Christmas story. And the gospel that does this so well is Luke.

And perhaps this is one of the reasons why Luke’s Gospel is typically people’s favorite when it comes to the Christmas story.

Luke’s Gospel is filled with stories and songs that capture the deep impact that Messiah’s coming should have on all people. It is in Luke’s Gospel that we have the Zechariah’s Song. Do you remember the story? Zechariah was the father of John the Baptist and husband of Elisabeth. But when the angel Gabriel came to him with the good news that Elizabeth would soon conceive and the child to be born would be the forerunner of the Messiah, Zechariah did not believe and he was made temporarily mute until the birth of his son. Zechariah was meant to be singing with joy, but instead, he was unable to speak.

But when God eventually loosened his tongue and enabled him to speak again, this amazing song bubbles out of him. I will just share a part of it with you.

Please turn to Luke 1:68-73.

**68 “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. 69He has raised up a horn[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A68-73&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24963a)**] of salvation for us in the house of his servant David
70(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), 71salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—72to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, 73the oath he swore to our father Abraham.**

In this song, Zechariah is clear that God is faithful to His promises. And because of God’s faithfulness and goodness, He is worthy of all our praise!

The sheer joy of the good news of God could not be pent up any longer and this song of Zechariah still sings and still impacts us today.

But this isn’t all for Luke. No, he’s just getting started. This same angel, Gabriel, comes to Mary months after being sent to Zechariah and Gabriel tells her this amazing news that she would be privileged to be the mother of the Messiah. And then when Mary goes to visit Elizabeth and Elizabeth shares how her baby leaped within her womb when Mary arrived to see her, what does Mary do? She sings.

She sings this beautiful song of thanksgiving.

Let’s listen to a sample of her song as well in Luke 1:46-49

**46And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord 47and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.**

Did Mary have everything figured out? No. She wasn’t sure how God would convince Joseph to not leave her. She didn’t know what Jesus would do in fulfilling God’s plan.

But she sang anyway. She trusted that God was in control and that she would be a vessel whom God would use. And that was enough.

But again, Luke is not finished. We come to the birth of Jesus itself and track #3 – the song of the angels. And we read of this angel appearing to the shepherds, saying **“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”**

But then, after this profound announcement, it seems like a great multitude of God’s heavenly host just could not help but get their praise on as well.

Remember, for perhaps thousands of years, these heavenly beings have worshipped the second Person of the Trinity. But now, this Divine Being had been born as a baby boy. But even in Jesus’ helpless state as a baby, He wasn’t any less God than He’s always been.

And these heavenly hosts start singing in Luke 2:14 **“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”**

Yes, it seems like a short song, but I’m sure that it was electric and amazing and breathtaking. For the rest of their lives, these shepherds would be singing and sharing that song with countless people.

And this song from the angels to the shepherds reminds us that Jesus came for everyone. Shepherds were of low rank at that time, but they had front-row seats for this amazing concert.

And last, but not least, on this Christmas Playlist of Luke is the track featuring Simeon. When Joseph and Mary take Jesus to be circumcised on the 8th day, according the Law of Moses. But this godly man named Simeon is moved by the Holy Spirit to enter the temple courts and somehow God made it very clear to him that this baby Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. And then Simeon picks up the infant, Jesus, and I trust that he asked them permission first. 😊

And please turn to Luke 2:28-32 to hear Simeon’s song.

**We read, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: “Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You may now dismiss Your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”**

Jesus came to save. He would officially be given the name Jesus that very day that Simeon sings about how this Christ child would bring salvation to the nations.

Simeon’s song reminds us that Jesus came for everyone. Jews and Gentile alike need Jesus and God was faithful to deliver on His promise.

But back to our world today, as much as we have been hearing Christmas music for the last few years to perhaps even a couple of months, the sad truth is that after today, many channels are done with Christmas music. There was this buildup, but after Christmas Day, it is back to life as normal.

But as Christmas, we are to be different. The season of Advent concluded yesterday, but today begins the season of Christmas. Christ has come. The wait is over. The celebration can begin. So I would encourage you to not stop listening to Christmas music after today, but to continue to sing Christmas music at least for a few more weeks. Technically, the season of Christmastide, as it is sometimes called, begins today and concludes January 5th, the last of the 12 days of Christmas.

The 12 days of Christmas is more than just a fun Christmas song. It is meant to be a reminder to keep singing and reflecting on Christmas and the amazing truth of the incarnation beyond Christmas Day.

**And finally, friends, as we ponder Christmas through the lens of Luke, what is the big takeaway for us today? And I think that it is meant to be a reminder that we are to be people of praise and celebration. Do we have to have all the answers? No.**

**Mary didn’t. Simeon didn’t. Certainly Zechariah didn’t. And I do not even think that the heavenly host fully understood all that Jesus planned to do on this earth.**

But each of them sang and each of them trusted in the goodness of God and His plan for all people. These songs make it clear that Jesus came for both Israel and the Gentiles. He came for religious leaders like Zechariah. He came for lowly shepherds. He came for men and for women. He came for young and for old.

Friends, none of us have all the answers. I know that I have Scriptures that I want to study more and I have areas to grow in.

But this Ultimate Christmas playlist that Luke gives us reminds us that we do not need to wait until we figure everything out before we start praising God.

Would following Jesus be easy? No. But it would offer true peace, true life, and true joy to all who say YES.

Brothers and Sisters, today is not only Christmas Day, it is also the last Sunday of 2022. This year has been a great year here at Chestnut Grove Church. We are stepping forward into being that light on a hill sharing the love of Jesus Christ. We are doing that amongst one another. We are doing that with others outside the church.

**Do we know all that God has in store for us in 2023? We do not. But I can guarantee you one thing. Jesus will still be Lord. And we are still to worship Him with everything that we are. Let’s keep singing His praises!**

Friends, there is power when we sing from the depths of our soul unto the Lord. We will sing again in just a moment, but I want to leave you with these words. Never stop singing unto the Lord. Not all worship songs are happy. We all go through bad days and we will all likely have at least a few difficult days in 2023. May you and may I remember that we can and should continue to praise Him with our actions, with our words, and through our songs.

Truly, Jesus is our savior and He is the only Savior. And we, by God’s grace, are among those that have been redeemed by the Lord. And so, whenever we start our Christmas music, may we never stop singing His praise. Amen.

# <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christmastide.html> - What is Christmastide?

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

Awaiting the Already by Magrey R. deVega