

The Reverend David Peterson's Sermon For December 25, 2025

It's just another Christmas card. You've seen hundreds like it before. It's the manger scene, with all of them clustered there together on the front.

Take the card in your hand. Look closely. You have to look closely because we hardly look at them anymore. You see them so often that you don't even recognize them anymore.

All you see are superficial images – your eye just glances at them – Mary in her blue, and Joseph leaning on his staff. Some shepherds in rags and wise men in robes – and the angel.

Do you ever wonder who they are? What makes them so special?

In the middle is Mary – always in the center. *Who is she anyway? What's she all about?* She was a young woman that gave a small town lots to gossip about – whispering over cups of tea *Do you think she's pregnant? Tsk they're not even married yet...is it Joseph's child? Does he know yet? I never would have thought that about her...*

But she was also a young woman who God chose to use in a special way – as terrifying as it may have been for her. She was a young woman of tremendous faith and magnificent courage who risked social disgrace and allowed God to touch her. She looks out at you from the Christmas card *asking If you have the faith to let God touch you.*

Just beside her is Joseph – ever-faithful Joseph who stands by protecting her. *Who is he? What's he all about? Oh, he's just an old fool* they scoff at him...you can hear the whispers. *Can you believe it? He's still going to marry her...I wonder what sort of story she told him...*

He was a man who allowed himself to trust in God. He was a man who allowed himself to believe that God could do the impossible. Despite his doubts and fears he allowed his imagination to grow into accepting the unimaginable. He looks out at you from the Christmas card *asking if you have the vision to imagine God involved in your life.*

In the background are the Shepherds looking on at it all. *Who are they? What are they all about?* The Shepherds were the nobodies of the ancient world. No one wanted to be a Shepherd especially one that worked the night shift like these guys. And yet God chose these ordinary men working the graveyard shift to be the first to hear the news about Jesus born in Bethlehem. The Shepherds were simple men and yet they had hearts that allowed them to receive the good news.

They look at you from the Christmas card *asking if you can receive the idea that God is interested in your ordinary life.*

In the foreground of the card are the Wise Men with the gifts. *Who are they? What are they all about?* Why should three men come from the East to bring presents to a child? They were Three Kings who had the humility to recognize someone greater than themselves. They were three kings who had money and power and nice clothes and a nice home and yet had an empty ache in their hearts and knew there must be *something more...*and they had the wisdom to seek for that *something more* in God. They look out at you from the Christmas card *asking if you have questions that you are seeking answers to – and if you are willing to make the journey of faith that they made.*

The Angel hovers over the whole scene. Who is the angel? What is it all about? Angels are big bucks nowadays. Angels are trendy and angels are *in*, and we can make a dollar off them as only we can to make them protecting and comforting. But the Angel here is giving a message that God is among us and God wants to be with us – if only we let Him. This Angel does what angels do so often – they slip from the spirit realm into our day-to-day world and they disturb us with the message that God wants to encounter us if we let Him. The angel looks out to you from the Christmas card *asking if you might just accept God's invitation.*

And so, the Christmas card rests in your hand. You have two options – it can be put on the stack of cards to be politely returned to or it can be thrown away. It can become just another Christmas card again. Or it can be looked at closely – perhaps for the first time. It can be what it was supposed to be – a message of something wonderful, something to send you on a faith journey.

If you take the second option, then the card ceases to be a card and instead becomes a way for Christ to be born into your life and come into your heart. If you take the first option, it will remain just another Christmas card and be forgotten...at least until the next Christmas when the cards arrive again – and when Mary and Joseph, the Shepherd and the Wise Men and the Angels – will look out at you again – and ask the same questions once again.