

Strange Advent for a Strange Year

Sermon 3 – Luke 1:57-80

Cf Luke 1: 19—20 Struck silent until (Masks)

Luk 1:11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Luk 1:12 And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

Luk 1:13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

Luk 1:14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,

Luk 1:15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

Luk 1:16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,

Luk 1:17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

Luk 1:18 And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years."

Luk 1:19 And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

Luk 1:20 And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time."

Luk 1:21 And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.

Luk 1:22 And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute.

Luk 1:23 And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

Oh this is tough, If you question the angel he can make you dumb. MM, there are some sarcastic comments I could make but in my wisdom, I choose not to!

I always thought this was a tough call but when you look at it, it's a blessing to Zechariah. How's that you say?

What a lesson, what an expectation that you won't speak until God's promise is seen. It's not like us just saying I won't speak until something happens. It really is – I can't speak until God does it – I will know God has done because I will be able to speak.

John the Baptist is born – Another baby- it's a baby boom – Remember what this baby was supposed to do!

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Let's list this.

1. Great before the Lord
2. Filled with the Holy Spirit. (Holy Spirit was rarely given to people then, unlike now when all Christians have access to Him.)
3. He will turn many to the Lord God
4. He will have the power of Elijah
5. Prepare people for the Lord.

So that's gonna be what you kid is going to do! He probably hoped he'd become a priest and follow the family tradition but wow, this is huge.

Problem was Zechariah didn't get it. So, he questioned. I think the question indicates that he didn't believe it.

Gabriel's reaction is not because Zechariah didn't believe him but because he didn't believe the message of God.

Now a question: What do we learn from this???

What are the things we don't get or we don't believe? Are there things God is communicating to us and we just aren't getting?

This story is over three parts. The final part is Zechariah's response. Remember his first response is unbelief, now look at this.

Zechariah's response - Filled with the Holy Spirit Luke 2:68-80

Luk 1:67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

Oh yeh, now Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit – He is speaking for God!!!!

Luk 1:68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people

What a starting statement! Blessed be The Lord God of Israel. Huge statement but look at why Zechariah gives this point of praise.

for he has visited and redeemed his people

Zechariah recognizes God's involvement not only in his own life but in the life of his family, his nation!!!!

Luk 1:69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,

This bit is also awesome. Zechariah recognizes that His child and the Lord are part of the salvation process for God's people. Notice he says "for us." Zechariah recognize that this is his families God, it is about his people. His son is part of this process.

As an aside:

Do we recognise our part in the process of others salvation? Sure, Jesus does the saving but hey He uses us in the process. Kids church leaders, playtime leaders, youth leaders, friends, work mates, all have a part to play.

Zechariah then does some history. He recounts how God has worked in the life of his people. Through prophets – we got God's message. What was the message. Look here

Luk 1:70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

Luk 1:71 that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;

Luk 1:72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,

Luk 1:73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us

Luk 1:74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

Luk 1:75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Get that

1. We should be saved
2. Shown mercy
3. Be delivered
4. So we can serve Him.

Remember these are the first things this guy has said for nine months!!!!

Then he addresses the child.

Luk 1:76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

Luk 1:77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,

Luk 1:78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

Luk 1:79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Again let's unpack this:

This kid – that we know to be John the Baptist will:

1. Be called the prophet of the most high
2. Give knowledge of salvation
3. Show the tender mercy of our God
4. Give light to those who sit in darkness.

That is some job description. That is some expectation. Yet we know John the Baptist did all that. What expectations do we have on kids? On our kids?

How do we prepare our kids to change the world?

Well look at what John's prep was.

Luk 1:80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance

to Israel.

John grew, became strong then spent time wandering around in the wilderness. What do we get out of that?