

**RCC in the Word**  
**Luke Chapter 1**  
**Week of February 26**

Luke 1:5-25 and 57-80

It has been my thought for sometime that of the four gospels, Luke was different from the other three. The lengthy beginning chapter of his gospel is a great example. As one writer stated "One does not speak about the sunrise without also speaking of the dawn." So is true as before Luke introduces Christ, he introduces John the Baptist but including the back story of his father, Zechariah and mother, Elizabeth. Their story is one that should speak to us today in our lives.

Verses 5-25

Luke describes Zechariah and Elizabeth "both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statues of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years." When reading this we should not assume that they were perfect but they were devote followers of God and walked as straight a path as one can as a sinful human. When offering repentance, theirs was genuine and heartfelt. This is a contrast of Israel in the beginning chapters of Isaiah as we have studied in our discipleship groups.

In his appointed duties of priesthood, Zechariah is met by the angel Gabriel of the Lord while burning incense at inside the temple. Zechariah's response to Gabriel's news that he and Elizabeth were going to be blessed with a child seems natural. We have seen this reaction before by Abraham and even by Mary when she is told she will be with child who is God in the flesh. But, Zechariah's lack of faith brings on a punishment that will last for the next 9 to 10 months. Calvin states that the reason that God punished Zechariah is because he had a lack of faith that God was granting an answer to a prayer that Zechariah had offered to God many times for many year: that he and Elizabeth would have a child. Now that he has been given that blessing, he doubts the news instead of praising and thanking God. Would you have acted any differently than Zechariah? How would you have dealt with not being able to speak for that season?

Luke writes that when Elizabeth finds out this news, she states that this is of the Lord, but she hide herself for five months. Why do you feel she did this? Was it out of fear that everyone in the village would be in disbelief? Was it because that she feared that if she told everyone and she did not truly conceive she would be made a fool?

Calvin writes that Elizabeth waited not for herself but for those around her. The fact that no one knew she was pregnant till five months, gave God more glory as it came as more of a shock and "miracle" to those around her. This builds onto God's story and what he was doing through the child that He gave to Zechariah and Elizabeth. It will become very clear to all that this child was not merely an answer to prayer of two parents but the fulfilling of prophecy.

Verses 57-80

This prophecy is further known after the birth of John. Zechariah regains his speech “and fear came on all the hill country of Judea, and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts saying “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.” Through this sign and the prophecy of Zechariah, the plans of God for John are announced. Just as Zechariah was silent for a season, so was the prophecy of God. But Zechariah spoke again and so did God. His perfect plan of salvation that was fixed before the creation of the world was about to unfold and John was to prepare the people for the coming of the true savior.

Wright says of these events in the beginning of Luke “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...When God acts on the large scale, he takes care of smaller human concerns as well.”

Wright summarizes this saying “This story of Zechariah and Elizabeth is more than the joy of having a son at last. It is about the great fulfilment of God’s promises and purposes. But the needs, hopes and fears of ordinary people are not forgotten in this larger story, precisely because of who Israel’s God is – the God of lavish, self-giving love.”

My questions to the Saints of RCC: Are you willing and ready to play a small part of the redemption story? What small events or tasks before you today play a role in God’s plan and are you going to obey that call?

As RCC expands our discipleship ministries, we have an enormous opportunity to effect those around us for the Glory of God. We are ordinary people but we serve an EXORDINARY God.

-Written by Gregg Childers