

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

SERMON NOTES

Week 2 December 8, 2024

“God is Gracious”

Luke 1:13, 17, 18-20, 39, 57-64; Psalm 46:10;
Habakkuk 2:20; James 1:19; Ephesians 2:8-10



I. Doubt

- A. Zechariah had a hard time _____ that his wife would have a child.
- B. You are going to have _____ and questions about almost everything in life including your faith.
- C. When our faith is well placed, our doubts or questions should lead us to a deeper _____.

II. Silence

- A. The appropriate response to being in the presence of God and when God is doing something amazing is _____.
- B. Pastor John Mark Comer says “_____ is the great enemy of the spiritual life.”

III. Mary and Elizabeth

- A. After finding out that she is pregnant, _____ goes to visit her relative Elizabeth.
- B. We all need an _____ and we are meant to be an Elizabeth for someone else.

IV. His Name is John

- A. The Hebrew name for John means “The Lord is _____.”
- B. _____ is one of the defining characteristics of God.
- C. In _____ to God’s mercy and love, we are meant to live lives of grace towards other people.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *December 9-14, 2024*

INTRODUCTION

When the Angel Gabriel told Zechariah his wife was going to have a child, Zechariah responded in disbelief and the angel took away his ability to speak because of his doubt. When Elizabeth did become pregnant, she went into seclusion for 5 months and then was visited by her relative Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus. Finally, when Elizabeth's baby was born, Zechariah named him John. So what lessons can we learn from this part of the Christmas story?

Monday: Luke 1:46-50

In verse 46 Mary said, "With all my heart I glorify the Lord!" Mary's first words to Elizabeth were a glowing expression of gratitude to God. In this season when we remember and celebrate the birth of God's Son, Jesus Christ, who or what in your life are you thankful for? What aspect(s) of your life cause you to glorify the Lord with "all your heart"?

Tuesday: Luke 1:51-56

In what ways are you rich or powerful? In what ways "lowly" or "hungry"? Are you willing to seek and accept help in any areas where your life may be "lowly"? Do any parts of Mary's song make you uncomfortable enough to actively use the ways you are rich and/or powerful to lift the burdens of those who are lowly and hungry, and not just to further enhance your own wealth?

Wednesday: Luke 1:57-64

To most Hebrews, names were not just a nice-sounding tag. They believed a child's name forecast (in a sense, even prayed for) the child's life mission. Zechariah was a fine name - it meant "Yahweh [God] remembers." But the Hebrew *iehoanan* [John] (of which the Greek *ioannes* was a short form) meant 'Yahweh is gracious,' an even better fit for John's message and mission. Has your name in any way shaped your life? What other influences have done that?

Thursday: Luke 1:65-66

When John was born, many Israelites grieved that there were no more prophets (e.g. the historical intertestamental book of 1 Maccabees 9:27). The last phrase of verse 66 in Greek literally read "the Lord's hand was with him." It was Old Testament language often used for prophets (cf. 2 Kings 3:15; 2 Chronicles 30:12; Ezra 7:6, 28; Ezekiel 1:3; 3:22). How did Luke's language foreshadow the prophetic impact of John's preaching? Does "the Lord's hand" still equip people to prophetically draw others to Jesus today?

Friday: Luke 1:67-75

The phrase "just as he said through the mouths of his holy prophets long ago" took in so much hoping, praying and trusting. God's covenant with Abraham, God's pledge to David, God's promise of a deliverer to make our broken world new - it was all going to happen after all! How can the story of John's/Jesus' birth help to nourish and sustain your trust in God's big promises?

MOVING FORWARD

Like Zechariah, we will all have doubts and questions in life including our faith. But, when our faith is well placed, our doubts or questions should lead us to a deeper faith. Zechariah's inability to speak is a reminder to us that this is the appropriate response when being in God's presence. And Mary and Elizabeth's special relationship is a reminder that we all need an Elizabeth in our lives. Finally, the name of the child, John, mean 'The Lord is Gracious.' One of God's main attributes is grace and in response to his grace we are called to live a life of grace toward others.

*Answers to the sermon notes: IA) believing, B) doubts, C) faith. IIA) silence, B) Hurry.
IIIA) Mary, B) Elizabeth. IVA) gracious, B) Grace, C) response.*