



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Advent: The Song of Zechariah

Speaker: Rich Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Luke 1:67-80

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David

(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

salvation from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us

to show mercy to our ancestors

and to remember his holy covenant,

the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;

for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Luke 1:67-80 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

- The story of Zechariah and Elizabeth is about them waiting a very long time to have a child. They were blameless and obedient in the eyes of the Lord and are examples of people who we should be following. Instead of them being blessed in the way of having many children, they had no children. Zechariah's name means "whom the Lord remembers", but his worldly name didn't match with his worldly experience – he felt like the Lord had forgotten him. Zechariah goes into the temple to pray and Gabriel the angel shows up to let him know that he would have a child, but Zechariah still couldn't believe. Zechariah's prayer is not transactional it is relational – he holds on to God. Zechariah and Elizabeth do have a son and name their child John, which means “God is gracious”. Their story ends with God answering their prayer. Zechariah's song comes out of a place of deep waiting. He sings because God is good. Singing is the proper response to God's grace.
- A faithful response to waiting is prayer. Waiting patiently is the foundation for a spiritual life.
- Prayer is about staying with God even when we don't get what we want. God can come to you no matter who you are.

- We are reminded to pray faithfully but not perfectly. Even though we are not faithful in our waiting, God is still faithful in his coming.
- We do all that we can to avoid waiting, but God uses waiting to transform our lives.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday Pastor Rich continues the series on Advent and discusses the story of Zechariah's Song, waiting on God and being surprised by God's faithfulness.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, was patience and waiting practiced or was it more impulsive and centered on immediate gratification? Were there different experiences in this practice for children and adults or was it consistent?
3. How well do you wait? What does your response tell you about yourself?
4. Have you ever been promised something from God, and despite being told it would happen, you have trouble expecting or believing it?
5. What is something you have been waiting for today and desire prayer for? What struggles are you facing in terms of waiting?