

Experiencing Christmas 2018

Zacharias and Elizabeth

Luke 1:5-25

God's Message Can Be Overwhelming

Luke 1:5-10

- The Lord's timing is always perfect
- God's grace & blessings are NOT based on performance

Luke 1:11-17

- We tend to struggle with the issues of fear and doubt

Elizabeth Saw Herself As Barren

Luke 1:13 *Do not be afraid, Zachariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you're to give him the name John.*

Angels Are Spirit Beings Who Live In God's Presence

They bring God's messages to people (as here to Mary, 1:26), protect God's people (Dan 6:22), offer encouragement (Gen 16:7), give guidance (Ex 14:19), carry out punishment (2 Sam 24:16), patrol the earth (Zech 1:9-14), and fight the forces of evil (2 Kings 6:16-18; Rev 20:1-2). There are good and bad angels (Rev 12:7). Bad angels are demons and have less power and authority than good angels. The main role of angels is to offer continuous praise to God (Rev 7:11-12) doing His will and work.

The Promises of the Lord Are Amazing and Challenging

- Zacharias received a word from the Lord IN God's House
- Underestimating God is just as serious as rebellion
- God does the impossible

Expectations Can Be Good And Bad

- Zacharias preferred the *safety of doubt* over the risk of *personal disappointment*.
- Our ignorance of God's Word and deep-seated fear creates *dys-courage-ment*

Skepticism Will Suffocate Faith

- Unbelief is when we believe more in ourselves, culture, society, technology, science rather than TRUST in Jesus
- Genuine Faith can look at all of life's disappointment(s) and heartbreak and still KNOW that this IS NOT all there is and this IS NOT all there's going to be.

Dynamic Faith Or Static Faith

- Experiencing Christmas is learning how to ENLARGE our living space allowing the Lord to do HIS miracle rather than fulfilling our expectations.
- Experiencing Christmas is realizing that in spite of our *illusion of control* over our lives, the Lord loves us and blesses us and provides grace to us.

Luke 1:25 ...*thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.*

Luke 22:14-20

When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, with fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God...And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me. Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you...