

Date: 30 Nov 25

Text: Luke 1:5-25, 57-66

Message: Ted Rastatter

Questions: Jason Finke

In this week's passage, Luke describes the foretelling of and the birth of John the Baptist. Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were old and without a child. While Zechariah was fulfilling his priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple and burn incense. While there, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him that Elizabeth would give birth to a son and that they should name him John. Zechariah questioned how that could be possible, and as a result was made mute until after John was born. After John was born, as they were preparing to name him, their neighbors and relatives wanted to call him Zechariah, but his parents named him John. At that point God restored Zechariah's ability to speak.

Main Point: God remembers God's promises and God will be gracious

- 1. God Remembers**
- 2. God Promises**
- 3. God Will Be Gracious**

Discussion

1. In the sermon, Ted noted that the theme for the first week of advent is hope. He talked about how as people get older, their hope can wane because they've been disappointed so many times. As you get older, do you find your hope waning? Why or why not? Ted also mentioned that Elizabeth's barrenness was a microcosm of Israel's hopelessness at that time. Why was Israel hopeless?
2. Ted also talked about how prayer is usually the first thing to go when people lose hope. Do you find that you pray less when you lose hope? Why does a loss of hope cause people to pray less? He also noted that when it says "God remembered", it does not imply that He has forgotten, but that He is acting on something He previously promised. How is this fact demonstrated in this week's passage about John the Baptist? Why should this encourage us to continue praying even when we lose hope?
3. Additionally, Ted discussed how God will keep His promises. **Read Titus 1:2 & Hebrews 6:18.** How do these passages encourage us that God will keep His promises? How does the certainty that God will fulfill His promises encourage us to continue hoping? Ted also noted that the purpose of prayer is to conform our will with God's. How does this fact influence the way we pray?
4. Finally, Ted stated that God will be gracious. How is God's graciousness demonstrated in the account of John's birth? Can you think of other biblical examples of God's graciousness? What are some examples of God's graciousness toward you?