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Luke:1

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All right, well, this morning let's open up our Bibles to Luke, Luke chapter one.

We're gonna take a break from our study in Isaiah for a few weeks and do do Christmas messages and New Year's message. So today we're gonna be in Luke chapter one. The title of my message is The Faith of Zacharias and Mary and Lord, as we open your word, we thank you for

your word. That is, is just amazing, Lord, that we don't spend more time meditating and studying it. To think of the uniqueness of this book. No other, there is no other book like this book in the world. Lord, you've given us your word. You expect us to, to Noah, to study, to show ourselves approve a workman.

That does not need to be a shame, rightly dividing the word of truth. We wanna rightly divide it, Lord. And that is fully dependent on your Holy Spirit to the spirit of truth, to teach us teach us your ways. Lord, light our paths. And Lord, when we're in the natural mind set, Lord, we receive nothing from you, is what your word says.

We have to crucify the natural man and let you speak and teach to us. And we know that's true in our daily devotional time. We know that's true when we come together and open your word in a time like this, that you will speak to us if we yield our minds. You won't force yourself upon anyone.

You want us to yield willingly. and have the mind of Christ. And so we thank you for that. In Jesus' name, amen. So Luke, chapter one as I mentioned the title of the message is The Faith of Zacharias and Mary. So it's an interesting comparison, these two Bible characters to, to look at how they responded to the Lord, how they responded to this appearance of an angel to them, right?

This does not happen commonly to people to have an encounter with an angel, but of course this was a very significant moment in history of the announcement

of both John the Baptist birth and Jesus Christ. So I think there's a lot we can learn in looking at these two lives. And so let's jump in and we'll start in verse.

Five of Luke chapter one.

There was in the days of Herd, the King of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias of the D of the division of Abba Ab Baja. His wife was of the daughters of Erin, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Now, I don't know about you, but to have a commendation from God over your life with a statement like that is pretty cool

As Christians, isn't that what we strive for? Like, I want God to say, look at me and say, that's a godly person. They walk before me. They obey my commandments. Jesus said, if you love me, you obey my commandments. And they observed the ordinances of the Lord blameless. Now, this doesn't mean they were perfect, it just means they took very seriously the word of God, the calling of God, especially in that culture as a Jew where you would be expected to show up for the feasts you would be expected to show up for at on Sabbath to the synagogue and to study the word of God.

And in their case Zacharias was a priest. And at that time in Israel, there, there were hundreds of priests and they would be really scattered out throughout the whole nation, ministering to the people. But during these annual feasts, they would all come together. To Jerusalem. And we see here Elizabeth and Aaron not Aaron, but Zacharias and Elizabeth serving the Lord in this annual feast coming to the Lord and it says verse seven, but they had no child because Elizabeth was Barron and they were both well advanced in years.

So that's an important part of the story to remember. They had no children. They were both well advanced in years and verse eight. So it was that while he was serving as priest before God, in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord and the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

Now this is interesting that they are doing their normal service to the Lord, but then in, in this particular time, the lot fell to Zacharias that he would be the one to go into the temple. This was something that would maybe never happen to a priest or if it happened even once in your lifetime. That was a great privilege.

So it just happened. Of course, we put that in quotes, right, that it fell to him. But God, of course, controlled that and wanted Zacharias in the temple at that time to go offer sacrifice to the Lord. But, well, let's read on verse 11 then. An angel of the Lord appeared to him standing on the right side of the altar of incense, and when Zacharia saw him, he was troubled in fear.

Fell upon him. But you know, one thing that's interesting here, kind of a side note is you see this couple serving the Lord, living for the Lord, taking very serious their commitment to the Lord. And they are, they're showing up for church, as it were. Right? And look what happens to them. You and that's what I tell people, man, you never know.

You just come to church. Oh, it's just another Sunday. You know, maybe not expecting anything to happen. And yet God speaks to you in some really significant way. And here what happened with Zacharias, he has this incredible encounter with this angel that we'll read more about here in a minute. But the point I wanted to make is the importance for us as Christians, you know, the commitment we have to the things of the Lord.

And even though it just seems like a routine, or it's another Wednesday night, or it's another Sunday morning, I think we should go with expectation and say, Lord I want to be used by you to as perhaps a voice to encourage others, but also wanna be open and hear you speaking into my life through others, a as we're at church and how much you can miss if regular church attendance is not part of your life.

And you know, some Christians I think are confused about this. They might say, well, you know, I'm under grace. I don't really need to go to church. And yet the scripture's very clear about that, that we're to not forsake the, as assembling together of the brethren, which is the habit of some it says in Hebrews, especially as you see the day approaching.

So I think it's just very important for us to be committed to a church, to be regularly attending and then coming with an attitude of expectation. And it's sad. Some people come. And they're looking for what people can give to them. You know, I'll have, sometimes people say, well, people aren't very loving to me in the church.

And it's almost like they're looking to take in, instead of coming to church saying, Lord, how can I be used by you? How can I have an eye out for a hurting person or someone who needs prayer? That's kinda what I learned early

on in my Christian life. I don't know, maybe if I heard it in a sermon or something and I was just like, oh, yeah, that makes sense.

I'm gonna, I'm gonna come to church to serve and not to be served, but to look for opportunities to minister to others. And it could even be in the form of just praying for the pastor. I remember years ago when we went, we lived in California and we felt called to go to pastor Greg Lori's church there in Riverside.

We, we lived pretty close to his church. . And I remember it was just a season in my life where I was very busy. We had four, four children, five years old and under you can imagine, you know, just chaos. And then I'm working a lot. And so between my job and family life, I didn't have a lot of time to actually serve in the church, but I remember very specifically the Lord calling me and saying, I want you to pray for Greg.

And that was right when the Harvest Crusades were starting and I just felt this calling of intercession. So, you know, the, whatever your service to God looks like, it may be different in different seasons of your life and nobody can judge you for that. Like somebody could have looked at my life and said, well, you know, you just come to church and you don't do anything.

You don't serve in the church. Well. . I didn't really have a lot of time in my life, but I was, I would pray, literally look at Greg when he was preaching and I would just be interceding for him. I mean, I just kind of took that calling seriously. I'm thinking, well, at least I'm doing something for the kingdom.

I'm praying for Greg. So I, you know, you think about if you know Pastor Greg, he does the, these stadium crusades where, you know, thousands of people get [00:10:00] saved and then every Sunday night at the church they would have like a mini crusade and you know, you would literally have 50, 60 people come up to get saved every Sunday night.

It was amazing. It was really an amazing time. And I felt like connected to that in the sense that I was bringing my gift of intercessory prayer. But you know, my point is not to lift me up and say, oh, how righteous you are, Rick. All I'm saying is connecting to what you are calling is for whatever you're season you're in.

And I think you see that with Elizabeth and Zacharias, where it says they were walking in the commandments of the Lord. They were wanting to be available to serve the Lord. And so he goes into the temple to burn incense. Now that

incense is if you studied the tabernacle or the temple, you know, that represents prayer to the Lord.

It's like our prayers are like an incense going up to God like a sweet aroma. Isn't that beautiful to think that when you come to the Lord and pray, He sees that, he hears that, that's precious to him. And prayer is a difficult thing I don't know about for you guys, but it is, it can be warfare, it can be labor and you know, you have your own prayer time with the Lord, or you come and pray with the church.

You know, we, I think we do a lot of damage to the kingdom of darkness when we pray and we pray together intercessory prayer. And if you've studied the Book of Luke, you will see prayer is highlighted often. Like he, he'll mention how Jesus would get up early and go pray alone. And you just see kind of, this is one of the themes through the Book of Luke, and we see it right here at the beginning where he's emphasizing the fact that hi, verse nine, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

and the whole multitude of people were praying outside at the hour of incense. So you see how prayer is emphasized there and you, and it kind of feeds our faith. It kind of gets you excited about prayer, doesn't it? When you think about, wow, I can make a difference through intercessory prayer. I can make a difference through praying for my loved ones.

You know, so many things we can't change, right? We don't have the power to change. And we might get depressed or overwhelmed or anxious, man, just turn that thought into a prayer. Turn that depression into a prayer, that anxiety just become a person of prayer and recognize that it's like a sweet smelling incense to the Lord.

And then now notice verse 11, and an angel of the Lord appeared to him. Now notice standing on the right side of the altar of incense. So there again, he didn't have to mention that, but he did because. There's an emphasis on prayer here. He's saying the angel appeared standing next to that altar of incense.

And then what does the angel say? Verse 13. But the angel said him, do not be afraid. Zacharias, for your prayer is heard. Do we kind of, are we getting the message here, ? The importance of prayer. You know, Jesus said may not always pray and not lose heart. Why would he say that? Because do you ever lose heart in prayer?

Have you ever been praying for something for years and years? It doesn't change. And then you just think, well, I guess God doesn't care, or He doesn't hear me, or he doesn't wanna change this thing. But the beauty of prayer where we can say, Lord, , thy kingdom come, thy will be done. So, Lord, I'm lifting this need to you.

I'm lifting this burden to you and I'm committing it to you. I'm not telling you what to do. God. I've heard preachers, some preachers say, you know, we can command God. You know, like, what? Are you kidding me? You get on your face before God and ask him what his awesome will is. In fact, you know, it says in Romans eight, we don't know.

We don't know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself makes intercession with groanings too deep for words. Well, you gotta come humbly and say, Lord, you're the king of the universe. You have all knowledge. What is your will? What do you want to do through my prayer teach? Help me to pray. You know, we were I was reading Psalm one 19 this morning, our prayer time.

You should join us sometime eight 30 to nine 30 every Sunday morning. But we were reading Psalm one 19, if you're familiar with Psalm one 19. It's the longest chapter in the Bible. It's the longest Psalm. It just goes on for pages. But it's very unique because every verse in that Psalm mentions the word of God in somewhere in some way, and it's a, and the whole Psalm is a prayer.

So it's a man praying about the word of God and he's saying basically, God, I recognize this is your book. This is your word, and it needs to be in play, an important part in my life. And Lord, work on my heart to where. I can be a man who lives according to your word. And you just see it, read Psalm one 19.

It's just amazing. And it's and that should be our prayer life. A big part of our prayer life is that we got an open Bible. We're praying, we're saying, God, this book is, you know, it's hard. It's a high standard and I'm weak. And but I can't just walk away from it. I can't. That's what some do. It's like, this is too hard.

I'm no, because I know I'm gonna stand before God pretty soon and have to give an account. It says Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will never pass away. So we,

we look at this book and we're like, Lord, this is hard. This is a high calling. But then you kinda start wrestling with the Lord. Remember Jacob wrestling with the angels? Kinda like. Lord I need you to bless me, but I'm a mess. And God, teach me how to walk in your word. And so you're just praying.

We gotta pray. We gotta call out to the Lord. And I dunno. I just sense this calling from the Lord in these last days for us to pray like we've never prayed.

And so what does he say? Verse 13, the angel said to him, do not be afraid. Zach Rice for your prayer is heard, your prayer is heard, and your wife, Elizabeth will bury you a son and you shall call his name John and you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth for he will be great in the side of the Lord and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.

And he will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the, just to make ready people prepared for the Lord.

And Zacharias said to the angel, how shall I know this for I am old, I'm an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years at least, he didn't call her an old lady. He tried to be a little more, you know, a little more gracious, she's well advanced in yours. And the angel answered and said to him, I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things have taken place because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their own time. So you see this rebuke really by the angel toward Zacharias that he was not responding correctly to the word of God. And notice in verse 18, he says, how shall I know this?

Basically what he's saying is how do I know this is gonna happen? God? And that is not the way we should respond to the promises of God. What's interesting is if you compare this couple Zacharias, And his wife to Abraham and Sarah. It's a very similar story that they Abraham and Sarah were well advanced in years.

They did not have a child. But let's jump over to Romans four and look at how Abraham handled the promises of God related to him having a child.

So verse 16, of Romans four says, therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also those who are of the faith of Abraham. Who is the father of us all. As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations in the presence of him whom he believed God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.

Who contrary to hope, in hope, believed so that he became the father of many nations according to what was spoken, so shall your descendants be. Now, this is interesting here, verse 19, and not being weak in faith. He did not consider his own body [00:20:00] already dead since he was about a hundred years old and the deadness of serves womb.

He did not waiver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, being fully convinced that what he had promised, he was also able to perform and therefore was accounted to him. For righteousness. So God is commending Abraham's faith. In other words, Abraham looked at his life and he said, well, I am unable in the natural to produce a child.

My wife can't conceive a child. She's too old. I'm too old. But hey, with God, anything's possible. So thi this is a mistake we can make, is we look at ourselves, we say, well, God could never use me. I'm, you know, I'm too weak. I'm too sinful, I'm too old, I'm too young. I'm too this or that, whatever our excuse is.

Rather than saying, well, no, God, with God, anything's possible. See, that's what faith is, right, is to say, I believe that God can work in my life and will work in my life. And you know, as we go, as we continue to go through Romans,

The point Paul is making, he's calling us to a life of faith. God is calling us to a life of faith in Christ and he's giving Abraham's faith as an example. Right? So if you jump over to chapter five of Romans, so chapter four is talking about the importance of faith and how Abraham is an Old Testament example of faith.

And then chapter five of Romans, he says, therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into disgrace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. So notice Paul emphasizing faith in Christ and that now not only do we have peace with God through Christ, but we have access by faith.

Into the grace of God, into the presence of God. Isn't that powerful? That, and I think this is where it, the rubber really hits the road for our lives. Are you a person who's walking in faith daily? Are you a person who's going before the throne of God and trusting God with issue after issue? You know, what happens in our lives is we, because we're not casting our cares on the Lord because we're not people of prayer, the burdens start to stack up and then you feel this weight.

You know, I was just talking to somebody the other day, I was counseling and they're sent me a tax drafter like, like this huge weight has been lifted off me. You know, thank you Pastor Rick something. And I was just talking to them about, , like I just said, you can't control this situation. You gotta give it to God in faith and in prayer.

And this person that you're grieved about. You can't change him, but God can, you know, all he is doing is exhorting her in faith. And the kind of, the light went on for her. She's like, oh yeah. And the weight gets lifted, right? Isn't that what happens in our lives? And when, and I can sense that in my heart where I start to feel that weight pressing in.

I'm like, what's going on in my spirit? I'm losing the joy. I'm losing the peace. Well, you're not surrendering the latest thing to the Lord and it keeps coming at you, right? I mean, they're coming all day, every day. The burdens the issues, you know? I mean, don't even read the news. You want to get more burdens on you.

You know, it's like I'll just read the headlines and then commit it to the Lord. I just give that to you, Lord. I give that to you. I give that to you. I'm not gonna get sucked into that world and. , but God wants us to live in his presence. Verse five or verse two, it says, rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only that, but we glory and tribulations knowing that tribulation produces perseverance. Perseverance, character and character. Hope. So hopefully you are very familiar with his passage. It's so important in the Christian life. It's basically God saying a mature Christian is not looking for an easy life.

A mature Christian is looking to take the difficulties of their life and even rejoicing them, saying, God, I know you're developing my character. I know that's what's going on here. I'm not gonna fight against it. I'm gonna this, that, this burden comes, this trial comes. I don't like it in one sense, but in the other sense, I'm I'm mature enough to know, cuz I know your word enough to know that.

You allow trials in my life to grow me as a person that won't, I won't respond like a baby, but I'll respond like a person of character and I'll have perseverance through trials, and that'll develop character and then character hope where I'm becoming a person who, who says, Hey, I can live this Christian life.

I can do this. My life doesn't have to be a disaster. It, it can, my life can have meaning for the glory of God. And then verse five, five, he says, now, hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. So my point here, you were talking about the faith of Mary and Zacharias and Zachary Zacharias.

We have a kind of a bad example of faith. Even though he was a godly man, he didn't have faith in that moment, and he got rebuked for it, right. Do you know that's possible to be a godly person and not be walking in faith? Yeah. And then we're gonna compare to Mary, who was this young girl who was godly, but had tremendous faith.

When the angel came to her, you probably know the story. She didn't say, oh, how do I know all this is gonna be true? How is this even possible? She just said, Lord, I'm the maid, servant of the Lord. Let it be unto me according to your word. See, isn't that beautiful? That's the attitude we're supposed have.

I'm opening the Bible, I'm reading it. I'm praying over it, and Lord, let my life change according to your word. And you're not getting a promise that you're gonna have a child in your old age. You're as a Christian, your promise is you can walk in victory in this life and have purpose and hear the voice of God and be a person of character.

And so, man, I'm so tempted to keep going through on, through Romans here, but I did wanna read a few verses out of chapter five, because Paul goes on, he's talking about how this faith life we're living and chapter five is really a turning point. Paul's saying, look, you've been just by justified by faith, and now you're living in God's presence by faith, and you're becoming a person of character by faith.

And and now let me explain. Paul says, let me explain to you the great victory you have in Christ and that where you can put your faith in the person of Christ and the work of the cross. See that this is what the meaning of faith is. You're recognizing something that God has done or is doing, and you're just saying, yes, Lord, oh, I see that God, I just want to flow with your will and your purposes.

Faith is not saying, well, I do believe, oh no. Now I doubt. Oh, now I believe. No, it's not that at all. It's saying, Lord, I see what you did on the cross for me. You did that work. You initiated it, and now I accept that. You know, that's how you initially get saved, right? You come to the Lord where you humbly just say, I'm a sinner.

I need forgiveness of my sins. I want a relationship with God. Lord, forgive me of my sins. And you, and that's what we call the born again experience. But then that's just the beginning. Now you're walking with God. , but just like you're, the way you got saved was focusing on the cross, what God did, and you're responding to what God has done.

That's what faith is. And now as I walk with the Lord, I continue to realize, Lord, it's the cross is where I meet you. That's that place of sacrifice. Right? In the Old Testament, you would come to the temple, you would offer a sacrifice. They all knew that's how you interacted with God. You had to have a sacrifice.

So there's something between you and God, this animal sacrifice, visible blood sacrifice, kind of gory kind of, but it's, you would even place your hand on the head of this sacrifice when the priest slitted throat, I mean, Graphic stuff, man. Like, you're realizing, oh, I caused the death of that animal.

My sin is being transferred to that animal. Guys. That's how we walk with God every day. That's where we meet God. I say, Lord, it's the cross that gives me power with you. It's the work you did on that cross. So let's just read on quickly. In Romans five. It says for verse six, he says, for when we were still without strength in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.

For scarcely, for a righteous man will one die. Yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us. In that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us much more. Now you notice these much more statements in Romans, what Paul is saying, look, Christ died for your sins.

That's amazing and [00:30:00] awesome, but there's much more. There's this whole walk with God now that you need to discover Christian and walk in. You can't just say, well, I accept Jesus. My sins are forgiven, and now I'm just gonna go live my own life. No, it's just the introduction into knowing God, following the will of God.

So he says much more verse nine than now having been justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him. So in other words, we don't walk in this idea that God is mad at us because we're trusting in the blood of Christ. Now, verse 10, for if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son.

And again, notice the emphasis on the cross. If while we were enemies, we are reconciled to God through the death of his son much more. Oh, there's that

again. Much more having been reconciled. We shall be saved by his life. So the what the Lord is saying, you have the resurrected Christ right there with you, walking with you, tap into his life.

Don't just live in the consciousness of, well, my sins are forgiven, and now I'm just living my own life. No we're being conformed to the image of Christ, right? It says Romans eight, that's God's goal in every Christian's life. He wants you to be like Jesus. How did Jesus live? He says, I only do those things.

I see the father. , I only speak the words I hear the father very high standard, but that's what we're called to. So he's saying, you, you are saved by his life. Christ is walking with you. And not only that's kinda like a much more statement. Also, not only that, let's pile the blessings on, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we now have the reconciliation.

So let me ask you, do you rejoice in your relationship with God every day? Or you feel like, oh, he's always mad at me. I feel distant from him. I can never measure up. No. If you understand the cross and what God has done to die for our sins to, to rise from the dead, that his life may be in us now, that's where my faith should be operating.

And so, couple other verses I wanna read and then we'll get back to Luke, but

So let's just go to the end. Basically the rest of chapter five in Romans is comparing Christ the great work of Christ on the cross to Adam. Adam brought death to all mankind, and we inherited that sin and death. But Christ the greater, did a greater work and had a greater impact even than Adam's impact of sin and death.

So Christ is greater than Adam. Verse 18. Therefore, as through one man's offense, judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation. Even so through one Man's Righteous Act, the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. So also by one man's obedience, many will be made righteous.

Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound, but where sin abounded grace abounded much more so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin that grace might have bound?

Certainly not. How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it, or do you not know that as many of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death, therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death that just as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even So we should walk in newness of life and you might say, pastor Rick, you seem kind of obsessed with the cross. I think Paul was obsessed with the cross read through Romans. I mean, this is where we find our life. We find our power. And again, I'm emphasizing that our faith needs to be living right here, where we realize, hey, as Paul asked, don't you know this, that you died with him and you rose with him.

So I think that's where we can pray and we can and exercise faith and say, Lord, I want to understand this new life you've spoken of here in Romans. And I wanna walk in that power and I want to be a victorious Christian, and I want to see God's will done in my life. See, if we're so overcome by sin, how are you ever going to get moving on with God's calling in your life?

you know, and that's the sad part. And I've seen it happen in people's lives where they literally miss the calling of God for their life. And sometimes even God has to take 'em home early and it happens and it's very sad. And I don't want that for my life. You don't want that for your life.

But we gotta learn to overcome sin so then we can start hearing the voice of God to see what God's calling us to. And there's nothing more glorious on this earth than walking in the will of God. I mean, yeah, there's all kinds of difficulty that comes with it, but I'll tell you, it's the best thing going on this earth right now is serving the Lord in the calling he has for you until you go to glory.

So, back to Luke, where we're seeing the prayer life of Zacharias, we're seeing the angel appear to him. and then we say, we see the angels saying you will be mute and not be able to speak until the day these things take place because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their own time.

So we see this really strong rebuke for not having faith. Now we see this same thing with Jesus. If you read through the, you know, all the gospels, you'll see him often commending people for their faith or rebuking them for their lack of faith. You know, to the disciples, where is your faith or commending someone, Hey, I've not such, I've not seen such great faith in all of Israel.

The Lord wants us to meditate on who he is, how great he is, and then believe like, Lord, you with God, nothing shall be impossible. And, you know, we might think, well, you know, if an angel appeared to me, then I could have faith

like, you know, Zacharias Mary, well, I'll tell you what, part of the thing with an angel appearing to you is there's a higher accountability.

And I think that's God's mercy, that he doesn't have angels appearing to us on a regular basis. Cuz then you are now on a whole different level where God is saying, okay you've had visible proof of something I wanna do in your life and you're still not believing it. See, cuz that's not what produces faith is, see, if I could just see it, then I would believe it.

No, it's a matter of responding to the spirit of God being, having a sensitive heart. And I think Mary was in that place, you know, we can see. next week we'll get into the Song of Mary in verse 47, where we just really see her heart, a woman of God, and you see her heart, how she responded to the angel coming to her versus how Zacharias did.

And so that was an interesting kind of rebuke in the judgment that you will be mute. I wonder if there's a message there, right? That we speak as a word, you know, words of unbelief. Now I know that can be taken to an extreme by the faith, health, and wealth preachers that ab I think, abuse the whole concept of faith.

but there's definitely some truth to it. They, I think those guys take it and they kind of twist it. But there, there definitely is a, an element of truth there where we're walking around saying well just, you know, nothing ever goes right in my life. And you know, this is just too hard.

And we're complaining and we're speaking words of just unbelief rather than saying, Lord, hey, this is hard, that what I'm going through right now. But Lord I'm just surrendering this to you. I'm asking you to give me patience. I'm asking you to give me grace and your power.

And that's kind of the zone you're living in is not allowing yourself to be always complaining and speaking words of unbelief. But you know, I mean, things bother us in life, obviously. And so, Rather than complaining, why don't you just turn it into a prayer? I'm really frustrated about this thing.

You know, this person keeps doing the same thing. Well, why don't you just say, Lord, I just give this thing to you that this person does is bugging me, or this situation with my car or at work. You're just living in that zone of faith. Lord, I just give it to you. I rejoice in you, Lord, as I saw in Romans five and 6, 4, 5 and six.

Lord, I'm just called to, to live in your presence and your power through the cross. And Lord, I give this to you. And so you're a person of prayer and giving it to the Lord. And I just don't think God wanted to hear Zacharia speak any more words of unbelief for a while.

Verse 21. And the people waited for Zacharias and Marvel that he lingered so long in the temple. . But when he came out, he could not speak to them and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple for he beckon to them and remained speechless. And so it was as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.

Now, after those days, his wife [00:40:00] Elizabeth conceived and she hit herself five months saying, thus the Lord has dealt with me. And in the days when he looked upon me to take away my reproach among the people. Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin Betroth, to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the Virgin's name was Mary.

And having come in, the angel said to her, rejoice highly favored one. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. and isn't that beautiful? And again, you want something spoken over you by God or by an angel. Isn't that what you want to hear? highly favored one. The Lord is with you. The Lord has heard your prayers.

Again, we're kind of disin, you know, Zacharias. But no, he was a godly man and he was a very privileged man to be the father of John the Baptist. But he just, you know, he had some things that need to be corrected like we, we all do, right? But wow. This is what we should all be living for. Lord, I want you to speak over me, Rick.

Rejoice,

highly favored one. Oh yes, Lord. Thank you. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. Of course, this was related to the fact that she was chosen. To be the mother of Jesus. Yeah. Highly favored for sure. And yeah, we are highly favored because we're believers, because we are embracing what God has done for us through Christ.

That's, you know, that's a big deal to God, that you believe on Jesus and that you're trusting him. Not everybody is in that place where they want to do that. And when you could, he looks at your heart. And sometimes God gives me a glimpse of, you know, somebody's heart or, you know, as a pastor especially,

and I think, you know, that's maybe a gift of discernment or whatever, but you just see, oh I remember this one woman I kind of gave this word to.

It was like it was kind of like that word from The Lord gave to Nathaniel when he said behold there's a man without guile. And when Jesus saw Nathaniel and Nathaniel's like, how do you know me? Well, I saw you under the fig tree. And Nathaniel's thinking, well, there was nobody around when I was under there.

And I had this experience with God. You're the Messiah. So, but that

that how God looks at us and you might be surprised how pleased he is with you. You know, you look at yourself and you're like, you dirty bum. You know, look in the mirror. And the Lord's like, no, that's not how I see you. Well, you got the devil whispering, whispering in your ear. You know, you're accuser of the brethren.

And to understand, Lord you see my heart. I want to live for you. I want to seek you and pursue you with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I completely embrace the cross. That's where I'm gonna live my life. And that's the conditions for God to be, for you, to be highly favored with God. Did you know that?

It's not impossible, it's not like the only, the super spiritual ever get that kind of commendation from God, verse 29. But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying. So an, an appearance of an angel. Can you imagine? Like, I think there's this holy being who's probably projecting light, you know, spiritual light to where you're kind of seeing all your sin.

Of course, that's how it's gonna be before God. If you're not, if you're not walking with God, if you're not saved the full glory of his presence before the great white throne says people are gonna ru try to run from his presence. Cuz they're seen, they're sin they're like thinking, well, I'm a pretty good person.

And then they stand before God and they say, no, I'm not at all. And I'm, I'm a horrible sinner. And so there can be that tendency, even to a godly person, to have an experience with a holy angel like that to be troubled. Because if, you know, as a Jew, you would know the Old Testament, like how we're studying in Isaiah right now with as the Assyrians attacking the Jews.

And it says, God sent out one angel to destroy a hundred eighty, eighty five valiant soldiers in one night, one angel. So you're thinking right away your mind goes to those verses and always he here to destroy me. . And he, and so you notice he says the same thing he said to Zach Rice, do not be afraid.

Verse 30, do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Beautiful and behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth his son and shall call his name Jesus. Of course the name was important cuz Jesus, you sh in Matthew says, you should call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin.

You know, and sometimes I just call on the Lord, you know I'm struggling with the sin. I say, I call on the name of Jesus, who He, you're you said you would save me from my sin. And boom, there it is. Verse 32. He will be great. He will be called the son of the highest. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom. There, there will be no end. So this is no doubt. Who in her mind who the angel's talking about. This is the Messiah that is coming. And then Mary said to the angel, how can this be? Since I do not know a man? Now, it seems kind of similar to what Zacharias said, but it's really not because the heart of what she's saying, it's like, well, I'd kinda like to know the mechanics of this.

You know how it's gonna work, Lord. I mean, it's a valid question. Like, I have not known a man. Can I get a little more info here? And verse 35. And the angel answered and said to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the highest will overshadow you. Therefore, also that holy one who is to be born will be called the son of God.

Now, indeed, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is now the sixth month for her who was called Barron. For with God, nothing will be impossible. Isn't that good? Then Mary said, and this is the key, Mary said, behold the ma servant of the Lord let it be to me, according to your word.

And the angel angely part of her from her, no, no correction for Mary. Like it was with Zacharias, because that was her heart. Lord, just that's faith. Let it be to me, according to your word, Lord, just what you are doing, Lord, I want to be involved with, and here I am. I'm just yours. And that is a powerful place to be, isn't it?

Where the Lord says, okay, I can use that person, you know this. What's that verse in Isaiah? God says I'm the high and holy one who rules in the heavens, but this is the one to whom I will look. He who is of a broken and a contract spirit, and who trembles at my word. See that humility to just say, while God you're God, Alma Almighty.

I'm just your servant, and whatever you wanna do, you do. So she was obviously speaking, let it be done to, according to your word, that specific word that she was gonna be the mother of the Messiah, supernatural conception. Which a lot of trouble went along with that, right? If you know the story.

But she was willing to put up with all that for the privilege of having Christ in her body, physically in her body. We have Christ in our spirits and. To just be in the word of God and to say, Lord, let it be to me, according to your word. Again, read Psalm one 19. It's a prayer of a man of God praying over the word of God saying this, that very thing.

Lord, I want your word to be an important part of my life. I was watching a video the other day of a guy just going out in the streets and going up to people saying, I'll give you \$20 if you can quote one Bible verse and person after person couldn't do it. I mean, it's just sad. Like not one Bible.

And one guy said oh, John three 16. And the guy goes, well, can you quote it? And he goes, no, . So, . And then he finally found one guy who was I can do all things through Christ. He was like, okay, but the ignorance of God's word, I mean, that's, there's no excuse for that. You know, and I'm assuming these were unbelievers.

I hope they weren't Christians who couldn't quote averse. But it used to even be in our culture that, you know, the Bible is taught, or many years ago, the Bible is taught in the schools and and what, that's long gone. But but for us as believers, we certainly should be saying, Lord, let it be done to me, according to your word, we should be in this word.

We should be praying over it. So let's pray. Lord, we do ask you to help us to examine our hearts today to see if we are people of faith. If we are [00:50:00] people who are. , spending time in your word, praying over your word, like the psalmist of one 19 did to say, Lord, change me according to your word, that we would be like, Psalm one, I meditate day and night in your word, and Lord, that of course we're seeking your will in your word.

That's the whole purpose, Lord, this to what is your heart for our lives in general or, and specifically Lord, our calling, and Lord, that to have power over sin so it doesn't derail the purposes of our life, Lord,

and the plans that you have, that we can stand before you one day and say, yes, Lord. I, yeah I wasn't perfect. I stumbled a lot, but I did get on the path to your. And I did follow Jesus in my calling. And what, like I said, whatever that looks

like, it could be intercessory prayer, it could be serving in the school, serving in Sunday school just coming to church and being led by the spirit to go pray for someone to beyond listening to the Holy Spirit, to go talk to a neighbor or, but Lord, that we don't wanna live self-centered lives dominated by sin, but we wanna be free of sin.

And we see the promises, Lord, in Romans, that through faith in Christ, not only for forgiveness of sins, but for power over sin. And it's not because we're righteous in ourselves, it's cuz we're calling upon Jesus clinging to Jesus and saying, Lord, your name is Jesus. For you will save your people from your sin.

You give me power over sin. And so, Lord, I pray for each one here today that they can just , walk into that place of faith and the cross and the resurrection of Christ, and walk in that newness of life we read about in Romans. And so, help us just to be listening for your voice this week as we go.

We commit this day to you and Jesus name, amen.