



Sermon Series: The Hope, part 1

Sermon Title: Keys That Unlock Hope

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer, December 6, 2020

Luke 1:5–23

Zechariah's heart needed some "unlocking" in order to receive what God had for him. Many of us are like that. Our hearts are shut and locked.

Big Idea: God unlocks the hearts He seeks to enter.

God uses "keys" to unlock a heart.

KEY #1: GOD'S WORD

While Zechariah was alone in the temple, an angel appeared to him with a message from God that in their old age God would give Elizabeth & Zechariah a son; a special son.

John would be forerunner to the Christ. God used His word to begin to unlock their hearts. **Malachi 3:1**

God still uses His word (Bible) to unlock hearts. **Psalm 119:130**

KEY #2: GOD USES TROUBLES

Luke 1:19–22 Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."

Zechariah needed something more to get his attention. God used trouble.

Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

KEY #3: A MOMENT OF MERCY

Elizabeth gave birth, and 8 days later friends and relatives gathered to circumcise and name the child. The relatives expected the child to be "Zechariah, Jr." But Elizabeth said, "No. His name is to be John."

They turned to the Zechariah. He wrote on a tablet... "His name is John." Immediately... a moment of mercy. **Luke 1:64–66**

God used a merciful moment to open the hearts of others. God still uses such moments to provide windows of opportunity... a short time in which hearts swing open. **Romans 2:4**

KEY #4: A PERSON

Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied

Luke 1:76–79 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."

It was John whom God would use to point out the Messiah to a spiritually blind people. **John 1:29** "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

Many followers of Jesus Christ can trace their experience of salvation to an individual God used to call them to Himself.

Is there a hurt in your life? ...That God might be using to open your heart... just like he did with Zechariah.

Has there been a merciful moment in your life? Perhaps you realize you've been spared tragedy... you recognized it. It was amazing to you. Don't blow it off. God may have given it as a key to unlock your heart.

Is there a person God is using to open a way into your heart?

During this season there are people whom the Lord is seeking. Could that be you? What will you do?

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- In Luke 1, both Zechariah and Mary question Gabriel when he announces the birth of their sons. What made the difference for Zechariah to be punished while Mary was not?

- **Are there ever hearts that God is unable to unlock even though He desires to? Explain.**
- **When troubles come into your life, do they generally drive you into a deeper relationship with God or further away from Him? Explain.**
- **Which key has God used/ is He currently using to unlock your heart and get your attention? Explain.**
- **Has God ever used you as a key to unlock a person's heart? Explain.**