

Think specifically of something you feel like you're waiting for in life right now. How could you apply this verse? How could it change your heart and attitude?

Thank God today for His perfect timing and ways. Pray for the grace, patience and strength to trust Him even when it looks bleak.

Saturday

Please read Luke 1:26–56 in preparation for this weekend's sermon. What similarities do you see in Mary and Zechariah's encounter with the angel? What differences do you see?

Thank God today for sending His Son and intervening in all of our lives in this way. Please pray for this weekend's services. Pray that God will use TLC during this time of year to reach our community with the Good News of God's grace. Pray about who you'll ask to the Christmas concert or Candlelight services and pray for the courage and opportunity to ask!



TWIN LAKES
CHURCH
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PART 1

When Life Doesn't Turn Out the Way You Planned

NOVEMBER 26 & 27, 2011 • MARK SPURLOCK

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

Luke 1:5–7

1. With every _____ comes an _____

Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

Luke 1:8–10

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. . . . And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Luke 1:11–13, 17 (See also: Malachi 4:5–6)

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." *Luke 1:18*

2. We cling to _____ but we're called to _____

The angel answered, "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 proper time." *Luke 1:19-20*

- There's a difference between _____ and _____

3. God specializes in _____ and _____

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.” They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.” *Luke 1:57–61*

Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” *Luke 1:62–63*

Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. . . . Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. . . . “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. . . .”
Luke 1:64,67,76–77

Daily Meditations

Monday

Please read Luke 1:5–7. What did you learn about this amazing story in last weekend’s sermon? How did it encourage you?

If your life was summarized in two verses, what do you think they would say? What would you hope they say?

Thank God today for the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Thank Him for His timing. Talk to Him about the areas where you’re struggling to trust His timing right now. Ask Him to use the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth to encourage you and grow your faith.

Tuesday

Please read Luke 1:8–18. Write down something that in your life that interrupted your plans.

How did this interruption come as an invitation for you to trust God more deeply?

What are you discovering along the way?

Thank God that He is with you in every moment of every day. Talk to Him about the disappointments you’re struggling with. Ask Him to remind you all you’ve learned about who He is and to trust Him in the midst of life’s interruptions.

Wednesday

Please read Luke 1:19–20. Can you imagine how Zechariah must have been feeling when Gabriel proclaimed who he was?!

It’s interesting that part of Gabriel’s answer to Zechariah’s question emphasized that he was there to tell him good news. Why do you think we sometimes expect that God’s intervention in our lives is bad news?

When are you most tempted to cling to certainty? What would embracing the “mystery” look like in your life right now?

As you think about an issue you’re struggling with, in what way are you echoing Zechariah’s words: “How can I be sure of this?” We all have doubts at times. But what do you know for certain about God’s goodness, God’s ultimate plans for you, and God’s love for you in Jesus Christ?

Thank God today that He loves you. Thank Him for His patience with you. Pray that you will see God’s goodness all around you and that you will trust His goodness. Ask Him to help you grow in your confidence in Him and His plans for your life.

Thursday

Please read Luke 1:57–67 & 76–77. Elizabeth and Zechariah’s (eventual) obedience led to a tremendous blessing not only for them, but also for all who knew them.

How have you seen God’s goodness in past periods of waiting? How did God use it to encourage you and those around you?

Write down two or three things you’ve seen God do in your life lately. Now, think about how you can be ready to praise God (just like Zechariah did) for those things as you talk with people throughout the holiday season.

Thank God today for the ways He’s been faithful to you in the past. Pray that you’ll be bold in praising Him for what He’s done and that His work in your life will be an encouragement to those around you.

Friday

Please read Ecclesiastes 3:11. What does this verse teach you about God’s timing and ways?



He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.
Ecclesiastes 3:11

over