

Unpacking the Preach

Date: 4th December 2022
Sermon Title: Zechariah's Song
Bible Passage: Luke 1: 57 - 79

Introduction

Take time to read the passage from a couple of different translations.

- Highlight the key verses, repeated phrases or words from this passage. What do you think is the significance of these words?
- What do you know about Zechariah and Elizabeth from Scripture (see Luke 1:5-25)?

Recapping the Preach

Stu recapped Zechariah's encounter with the angel Gabriel in the Temple. He highlighted Zechariah's response of unbelief (Luke 1:18, 20) and Gabriel's response.

- A Bible dictionary describes unbelief as, 'a refusal to believe, an actual unwillingness to be persuaded. Unbelief sees more in the things that hinder than in God's promise to help'. Do you agree with this?
- What things that hinder, did Zechariah see? What promises or aspect of God character should he have focused on?
- What do you think was the root issue behind Zechariah's unbelief? Was it simply his old age or was there more to it?
- Are there times when you 'wriggle in the grip of unbelief'?
- What generally hinders you from seeing and believing the promises of God?

Stu moved on to unpack the song that Zechariah sings at the naming of God. He described it as a song of hope, anticipation, joy and firm faith being sung over his once unbelieving heart and traced four themes. Filled with the Spirit Zechariah sang of how (1) Jesus coming provides salvation (v.68-74), (2) Jesus coming gives us purpose (v.74-75), (3) John would prepare the way for Jesus (v76-79) and (4) Jesus coming brings the blessing of God (v68-79).

- What is the significance (if any) of Zechariah being filled with the Spirit?
- Where else do we see the work of the Spirit in the opening 3 chapters of Luke's Gospel? What does this tell us about the work of the Spirit in our lives?
- What words in the song point towards salvation?
- What response does vs.74-75 require of us? In what ways are we living these verses out?

Stu connected the song to the church today by suggesting that this is a song of hope, anticipation, joy and firm faith that the church should be singing over an unbelieving world. He suggested that unbelief is on the rise and moral standards on the decline.

- What should our response to the rise of unbelief be?
- Stu suggested that biblical illiteracy is one of the reasons for growing unbelief. Do you agree? What one thing can you do to change that?
- How can we 'sing' this song of hope, anticipation, joy and firm faith that the church should be singing over an unbelieving world?

Response

- Is there anything from the preach and passage that you will be taking away to reflect on or work on?
- Who can you invite to a Christmas Service this year?

Prayer pointers

- Take time to share prayer requests and pray for one another.
- Pray that the Lord would open up opportunities for you to share your faith.

Additional resources:

If you need some additional resources the below websites are useful:

- <https://www.gotquestions.org>
- <https://bibleproject.com> (videos)
- <https://enduringword.com>
- <https://www.biblica.com>
- <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/>