

Dec 11, 2022



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

When we're facing unyielding circumstances may we trust that God is working, even when we don't see the final outcome

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Heavenly Father, thank You for what You've revealed, which brings me hope, peace, and love. Help me to grow in my love for You

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it

(Isa 55:11 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", Nov 13, 2020)

**Series: From Darkness
to light**

UNIT 1: God's Preparation

NEXT WEEK

**John the Baptist Appears
(Luke 3:2-6, 15-18)**

Zacharias Speaks Luke 1:57-66, 76-79

Lesson Background and Introduction

Our text concerns the unique role of Zacharias's son, John the Baptist. What was this role? First of all, Zacharias declared John's office. John the Baptist was to become a prophet of the Most High, the last in a long line of Old Testament prophets. He was given the task of speaking for God, as were all the prophets. John's unique role was to speak for God right on the threshold of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus, a very high privilege and sacred duty. Then John's task or mission was outlined more specifically. He was to go before the Lord, preparing the way. John's unique ministry was to bear witness of the Lord Jesus and to prepare people spiritually for their own encounter with the Savior. In this he became a model for all of us. All who believe in and follow the Lord are given the task to bear witness and to prepare hearts for the Lord Jesus. Finally, Zacharias spoke of the content of John's message. It was to be a messianic message. The Lord Jesus would be all about granting salvation to sinners, delivering them from the penalty of sin. There is no way to escape it, the ministry of the Lord Jesus was and is a ministry of salvation. During the Christmas season, we are bombarded by snowmen, reindeer, parties, and programs. But the message of the season is that Jesus was sent into the world to save sinners. Zacharias's prophecy takes us right back to the basics. We see the prophecy of his unique son, born to unsuspecting parents. We see why he came and what he was to do for God. And it all leads us back to the good news that God sent His Son into the world to save sinners

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

When Mary visited Elisabeth, the unborn John "leaped" in his mother's womb, and Elisabeth "was filled with the Holy Ghost" (1:41). Elisabeth proclaimed her relative to be blessed because of Mary's demonstration of faith and belief in God's words through Gabriel (1:45). The proclamation led Mary to rejoice through a song of worshipful adoration and prophetic expectation (1:46-56). Luke's Gospel emphasizes God's work in the world by way of Elisabeth, Mary, and their experiences while pregnant. This lesson's Scripture depicts the second half of a type of pause that affected John's father. When Zacharias received Gabriel's revelation regarding Elisabeth's pregnancy, he questioned whether God's promise could come true (see Luke 1:18). Gabriel gave a sign to Zacharias: he would be mute until Gabriel's words were fulfilled (1:19-20). Zacharias would have to endure this sign for the length of Elisabeth's pregnancy. Elisabeth recognized that God was at work in and through her pregnancy. She proclaimed that "the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men" (Luke 1:25). Zacharias's so-called dramatic pause, his inability to speak, came before the high point of his depiction in Scripture. When he recovered his voice, his first act was to praise God! Though Zacharias had previously expressed doubt, God remained faithful to him and Elisabeth. The dramatic pause prepared Zacharias to give dramatic praise; God showed His goodness to the couple by giving them a son. This son would someday prepare people to receive the goodness of God's salvation. We all have seasons of life when we face dramatic pauses, when we may not have words to praise God or give Him our prayers. When this occurs, we may wonder if our failures have ruined us or if the presence of God has left us. But as Zacharias discovered, God is faithful and merciful despite our unbelief. His faithfulness invites us to give Him praise. His mercy calls us to embrace His forgiveness. With lives of praise, we can proclaim His faithfulness for the whole world to hear. When we find ourselves facing a dramatic pause, we can offer praise that proclaims God's salvation for the world. Where God's salvation is present, darkness and death will turn to light and life.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Birth and Naming of John (Luke 1:57-61)

Birth through God's mercy (57-58)

- Mercy because God loves us (Rom 5:8)
- Mercy because God is faithful and righteous (Rom 3:3-5)
- Mercy because of grace (Eph 2:8-9)
- Mercy because it prompts God's salvation (Rom 9:16)
- Mercy because God started it before the beginning of time (2 Tim 1:9)

Name provided by God (59-61)

- Provided by God because of His love (2 Sam 12:25)
- Provided by God because he is sent by God (John 1:6)
- Provided by God because of prayers (Luke 1:13)

Zacharias' Restoration (Luke 1:62-66)

Restoration to name the son (62-63)

- A name that God provides (Luke 1:13)
- A name that is better than the finest perfume (Eccl 7:1)
- A name that is one that is written in Heaven (Luke 10:20)
- A name that is new (Rev 3:12)

Restoration of voice (64)

- Restoration of voice through God touching the mouth (Jer 1:9)
- Restoration of voice through God opening the mouth (Ezek 33:22)
- Restoration of voice through Jesus' intercession (Mark 7:32-35)
- Restoration of voice through repenting of unbelief (Luke 1:20)

Restoration that resulted in the fear of God (65-66)

- Restoration through the fear of God provides health (Prov 3:7-8)
- Restoration through the fear of God results in a productive life (Ps 128:1-2)
- Restoration through the fear of God brings knowledge (Prov 2:3-5)
- Restoration through the fear of God results in needs being met (Ps 34:9)

Proclamation of John's Role (Luke 1:76-79)

Role of a prophet (76)

- People considered John a prophet (Matt 14:5)
- The Jews were afraid that John's prophecy was from Heaven (Matt 21:24-26)

Role with a mission (77-79)

Mission to provide knowledge of salvation (77)

- Knowledge that Jesus is the light that must be believed in (John 1:7)
- Knowledge that Jesus is the Christ and is above all (John 3:26-31)
- Knowledge that John only baptized for repentance, but Jesus baptized for salvation (Acts 19:4)

Mission to present the One who shines on those living in darkness (78)

- The One who is the great light (Matt 4:12-16)
- The One that gives light to every man (John 1:9)
- The One who is the light of the world (John 8:12)
- The One who the light that children of light live in (Eph 5:8)
- The One who is light in which there is no darkness (1 John 1:5)

Mission to guide feet into the way of peace (79)

- Peace that is eternal and keeps away fear (John 14:27)
- Peace with God that comes through Jesus (Rom 5:1)
- Peace that comes from a mind that is controlled by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:6)
- Peace that is part of the kingdom of God (Rom 14:17)