



Part 1: Life in the Waiting Room

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Luke 1

⁵In 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. ⁶Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

Zechariah was: Faithful — waiting on God makes us stronger, not weaker

Flawed — at least in the minds of people

Forced — to wait for a child and a Messiah

Waiting time is never wasting time in God's kingdom.

...we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. — *Romans 5:3-5*

While you're waiting for God's miracle:

Pray the process, not just the end goal

Pray with others in the process

Pray for God's perspective on his perfect will

Pray with a heart of gratitude and contentment

Pray that God will help you wait on/attend to your King

Zechariah had resigned himself to God's answer until God announced:

Change of plans!

¹¹Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³But 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 call him John. ¹⁴He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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.”

²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. – Luke 1:11-22

The silence was not a punishment: It was an opportunity...

...to be obedient (Luke 1:57-66)

...to recognize that it's not about me, but about what God is going to do through me

...to understand the purpose in the silence

God was about to break 400 years of silence with the human cry of a heavenly King

Zechariah's Song

“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,
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.”

– Luke 1:67-79

Next Steps

Christmas Eve invitations are available in the Commons today. Pick up one or two and prayerfully ask God this week, “Who do you want me to bring to Christmas Eve?” When you sense that God has answered, write that name in the “To” blank and your name in the “From” blank, and hand deliver the invitation. There's room to write a note inside the enclosure, so feel free to do that.

Small Group Questions

- 1) When it comes to Christmas, do you plan every detail or are you more spontaneous? What would it take for you to be open to a change of plans?
- 2) Read all of Luke 1. What are you waiting for this Christmas?
- 3) What does it mean to “pray the process” according to Romans 5?
- 4) How was Zechariah's silence an opportunity? How could God use silence in your life at this time of year?
- 5) How could you wait on God (waiting = attend to) during this season?
- 6) How can we pray for you today and throughout the week?