

**How We Wait**

Luke 1:5-25

**EXPLORING THE SERMON**

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

**VERSES FOR MEDITATION AND REFLECTION**

*<sup>6</sup> Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." She [Elizabeth] said, <sup>25</sup> "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people." **Luke 1:6, 18, 24b-25***

**DISCUSSION**

This Sunday marks the first day of Advent, the first day of our liturgical year, and the four-week period leading up to Christmas. It is during this season we are given the opportunity not just to think about *why* we wait, but *how* we wait, as we await the coming of Christ – for both His birth, and His promised second coming. The scripture passage today follows the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, who after a long period of waiting, are surprised by God's favor and provision.

When Zechariah encounters the angel Gabriel in the temple while serving God, he does not believe the angel's message that God will bring them a son. Gabriel responds to Zechariah's doubt and disbelief by rendering him mute until their baby, John, is born a few months later. The angel begins the exchange with, "*Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard.*"

***As we focus on the practice of waiting this Advent season, have you been waiting on something in particular? In what areas of your life are you in need of healing? Where have you grown weary of waiting for an answer from God?***

Even though Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth are shown to be "*righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord,*" they have nonetheless experienced shame and disgrace for a long time, not having been able to conceive. The angel Gabriel meets Zechariah and Elizabeth in the *midst* of their doubt and despair, as they likely felt like their prayers had not been heard nor would be answered.

***The extreme example of Zechariah and Elizabeth becoming parents at such an old age gives us hope that even in our longest seasons of waiting on God, He can still answer our prayers. During this season of waiting, what things that you think may be "dead" or "over" might be brought to God with the anticipation that He can make something new?***

Trusting God in the middle of our circumstances, no matter how difficult, is challenging work which requires dedication and faith. In line with God's promise, Elizabeth became pregnant against all odds. Not doubting the source of this miracle, she declares, "*This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.*"

***For many of us, God has answered our prayers and brought hope during times of darkness. Where have you experienced this in your life? How have you celebrated God's faithfulness?***

***Dear Lord, thank you for the hope of which you remind us in this beautiful story. Help us to remember to celebrate the ways you have made things new in our lives. God, we trust your provision and we know You hear even our smallest prayer. Amen***