

Time to Get Ready

Luke 1: 1-25

I. God Uses Who He Wants

- a.** Notice the insignificance of Zacharias and Elizabeth
 - i. He was just another Priest – doing his job but he wasn't a High Priest or anything special
- b.** Notice the age of Zacharias and Elizabeth
- c.** God uses ordinary people – from 'Purpose Driven Life'
 - i. Abraham was old
 - ii. Jacob was insecure
 - iii. Gideon was poor and unprepared/untested
 - iv. Samson was codependent
 - v. Rahab was immoral
 - vi. David had an affair and had all kinds of problems
 - vii. Elijah was suicidal
 - viii. Jeremiah was depressed – read Lamentations - wow
 - ix. Jonah was reluctant – that's an understatement
 - x. Naomi was a widow
 - xi. Peter was hot tempered – there is hope for me
 - xii. Martha was a worrier – there is hope for Ellen
 - xiii. Samaritan woman had several failed marriages
 - xiv. Zaccheus was very unpopular
 - xv. Thomas had doubts
 - xvi. Paul had poor health
 - xvii. Timothy was timid
 - xviii. And you think you have issues – what is your excuse?
 - 1. you need to volunteer to serve
- d.** God used a donkey to speak – He can and will use who he wants to use.
- e.** Don't think that God can't use you? Take a look around you – see any other 'ordinary' mules?
- f.** The one distinguishing feature of these people
 - i. V. 6 – they were righteous – 'upright in the sight of God'
 - ii. What do people say about us?
 - iii. Do we seek to do what is 'right'?

II. The Prayer of a Righteous Man is Always Answered (v. 13)

a. God has everything planned out – He is sovereign

b. His timing is perfect

i. Ever wonder why you have to wait for somethings

ii. The timing isn't right

1. the job hasn't opened up yet

2. the right house isn't for sale yet

3. God knows what lies ahead – do you?

4. Proverbs 16:25 "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death"

5. Story of Jacob and Rachel – why did God let Jacob marry Leah – lineage of Jesus

a. God is orchestrating events in our lives to bring himself glory. Like Rachel, we don't know God's timing for our future, but we can trust that just as he knew what he was doing with Rachel, he knows what he is doing with us.

b. me and Ellen – look at what we learned, things that I was able to do that I wouldn't have otherwise

i. God prepared me to be Kyle's dad

III. Lack of Faith Brings Discipline

- a. Notice that Zacharias was struck dumb – or silent. He couldn't speak.
- b. God Disciplines those He loves –
 - i. Proverbs 3:11-12 (NIV) My son, do not despise the Lord's *discipline* and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.
 - ii. Heb 12:5-8 (NIV) And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, *do not make light of* the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; *God is treating you as sons*. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.
 - iii. Heb 12:9-11 (NIV) Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may *share in his holiness*. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a *harvest of righteousness* and peace for those who have been trained by it.
 - iv. Job 5:17-18 (NIV) "Blessed is the man *whom God corrects*; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal."
 - v. 1 Cor 11:32 (Phi) But when God does judge us, he disciplines us as his own sons, that we may not be involved in the general condemnation of the world.
 - vi. **He knows what is best for us!**
- c. Our discipline should be a reminder that HE is in control and we need to trust HIM.
 - i. Think before you speak – Zacharias knew Old Testament history
 - 1. He knew the story of Abraham and Sarah
 - ii. Recognize God's hand –
 - 1. this was an angel that appeared before him
 - 2. why do we doubt that God can work miracles in our lives?
 - a. How clear does God have to make it in our lives
 - b. We don't have any issues with giving up and saying, "well, I guess it wasn't God's will"
 - c. Why can't we also believe that He is working to do something miraculous in our lives.
 - d. **What good thing would a loving father withhold from his children?**