



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Luke Sermon Series

Supports Session 1: Planned

Sermon Title: The Promise of Faithful Prayer

Passage: Luke 1:1-17

Connection to Luke 1

God used a faithful couple who had prayed for years for a child. They remained faithful to God even as they waited for several years for God to answer their prayers.

Introduction/Opening

In the movie *Sergeant York*, Gary Cooper played the role of York and Walter Brennan played the role of the mountain preacher, Pastor Rosier Pile. In one scene of the movie, York and Pastor Pile have a conversation about battling the devil with prayer. York laments that he had prayed and decided it was no use. Pastor Pile replied, “It ain't only praying, Alvin, it's believing.”

For years Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth had been praying for a child. They had been praying and believing. Their praying and their believing were about to become a reality.

Outline

1. Their Character Affirmed (vv. 5-6)

Luke describes both Zechariah and Elizabeth as righteous and obedient believers in the Lord. The idea of living righteously is referred to many times in the New Testament in terms of walking.

- a. Galatians 5:16
- b. Ephesians 4:1
- c. Colossians 1:9-10

Believers should be known for their character.

2. Their Situation Defined (v. 7)

There is a huge little word in verse 7: “But.” They had no child because Elizabeth could not have children in her youth, and now she and her husband were advanced in years. This implies they, like Abraham and Sarah, were beyond child-bearing age.

For many years, they had sought the Lord for a child, but the answer seemed to them to be no. However, the reply from the Lord was wait. They were to wait for His timing and wait for Him to show forth His glory in fulfilling His redemption plan.

Their character was not defined by their circumstances. They remained faithful to God.

3. The Answer Revealed (vv. 8-17)

- a. The timing (vv. 8-10). This is a clear indication of the Lord's sovereign timing. Paul pointed to the fullness of time in Galatians 4:4-5. From the human perspective, it was time for Zechariah's division to minister and burn incense. This time the lot fell on him. The lot was controlled by the Lord (Prov. 16:33). At the very moment he burned the incense and the whole of the people fell silent in worship in the outer court of the temple and the clouds of incense rose to the Lord, the angel appeared to Zechariah.
- b. The messenger (vv. 11-12). The angel appeared to a startled and fearful Zechariah to give him the message for which he had been hoping and longing. Who was this messenger? None other than Gabriel, the messenger angel of Jehovah (v. 19).
- c. The message (vv. 13-17). The prayers of these faithful servants had been heard and were going to be answered in the birth of a son named John. This son would be special, even before his birth it was known what his purpose would be. This son was to bring joy (v. 14), be holy (v. 15), filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 15), and call many to repentance in preparation for the coming of Messiah (vv. 16-17).

Conclusion

Remember what Pastor Pile said, "It ain't only praying, Alvin, it's believing." Are we praying and believing in His promises? Such as His promise to provide wisdom amid the trials of life (Jas. 1:5)? His promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5)? His promise that He will complete the good work He started in us in Christ (Phil. 1:6)? His promise that He will return to receive us to Himself (John 14:1-3)?

Neil Gant is a native of Memphis and now lives in East Tennessee serving as Pastor of the Oakwood Baptist Church in Knoxville since March of 2019. He has served in pastoral ministry for over thirty-nine years. He has been married to the former Lea Gillespie for over thirty-nine years, and they have one adult daughter named Anna. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Blue Mountain College and both his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2020 by Holman Bible Publishers.