

# “The Song of Zechariah” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Advent Midweek 1 December 4, 2024

- I. **The Song of Zechariah** – Luke 1:67-80 – Previously read
- II. **It might surprise you, but not every song is set to music or sung.**
  - a. Some songs are shared across the generations as teachings and beliefs.
  - b. Here’s a song that parents like to teach their kids and grandchildren in order prepare them for life and find happiness:
    - i. “Live for yourself and pursue your own passions, because the primary reason for your existence is to build up your own glory, not the glory of God.”
  - c. No, you won’t find that song anywhere in the Bible, but yes, people teach this to their kids and their grandchildren... who end up taking it to heart and become selfish and prideful.
    - i. Sadly, they teach their children what matters most in life is how special they are and how successful they are.
    - ii. For example, if parents discover that their kids are gifted in a certain area, they teach them that this talent should be the focus of their entire lives... even if it’s at the expense of everything around them.
    - iii. While in Colorado, there were many young people who spent every waking hour training for skiing or ski jumping and nothing else mattered.
      1. Their parents would travel all over the world to attend competitions, put their kids in summer school, and do anything necessary to help their child win an Olympic medal.
  - d. Sadly, even Christians sing this same song to their children by teaching them that Jesus should always be the center of their lives... Unless Jesus gets in the way of their plans for glory...
    - i. Children hear how important Jesus and going to church are, but when sports or some other event comes up to showcase a kid’s talent – then God takes a backseat.
    - ii. The message? Follow Jesus, but just don’t let Him mess with your chance at getting a good scholarship... or being successful.
  - e. I suppose it’s no different with us as adults...
    - i. When the Bible tells us to boldly confess our faith to others, we might do that... as long as it doesn’t mess with our chances at getting a promotion at work.
    - ii. We look at the Bible as important, but certainly not worth dying for...
    - iii. If Jesus says to drop everything and follow Him... that was for those people back then, but we don’t think it means the same thing today.
    - iv. In other words, we don’t want to sacrifice our earthly plans and designs to listen to God’s command and call.

- f. You might say that these are the songs we sing and teach our children, and what we believe ourselves.
  - i. The trouble is that we truly believe glorifying God is important, but that comes in second to building up our own glory... our comfort, our peace, our wealth, and our pleasure.

III. **In Luke chapter 1, Zechariah teaches us a much better song.**

- a. Before our reading today, the story begins with an angel telling Zechariah that his wife will have a baby – and she is far too old for that kind of thing.
  - i. The angel explains that the baby will be a prophet like Elijah... which by itself was amazing, because more than 300 years had passed since a prophet had been around.
  - ii. But even more amazing was that this child would be the one to announce the Savior of the world... he would pave the way for the Messiah!
  - iii. It's kind of funny, but I wonder how Zechariah taught his son to be humble and put God first when the little guy was given the greatest of honor from God Himself?
    - 1. "John, you are not that special... now put this camel hair coat on and go eat your grasshoppers..."
- b. All kidding aside, that's exactly what Zechariah teaches John.
  - i. His son was finally born, and a crowd is around him trying to figure out how this miracle happened and what kind of amazing future Zechariah has planned for his new son.
  - ii. You see, he had no voice because he doubted the angel's words, but was now able to speak... and the first words out of his mouth are a song... not about his own child... but about the Christ.
    - 1. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant" (vv 68–72).
- c. Zechariah begins his song not by praising his son but by praising Mary's Son... He praises her Son as the one who is going to deliver His people from their enemies... from sin, death, and the devil.
  - i. After that he tells his son, John, that his job will be to prepare the way for this Savior, and that his goal in life will be to get people ready to receive the love of God that Jesus is going to bring.

IV. **I'm here to tell you today... Jesus brought us that salvation.**

- a. As Jesus walked the straight path that John the Baptist prepared for Him... He took all those sins...
  - i. The sin of pride...

- ii. The sin of loving ourselves and our accomplishments instead of God and our neighbor...
    - iii. The sin of seeking our own glory above God's...
    - iv. He took all of that and washed them away with the most powerful cleaning agent ever... His blood.
    - v. He erased and forgave our sins as the sacrificial lamb, born to die and take our sins to the grave.
  - b. Zechariah's son would prepare Jesus' path, and Jesus traveled along casting out demons, raising the dead, and forgiving sins all the way to the cross – as He won the victory over sin, death, and the devil.
    - i. Our enemies have no real power over us now... we have God on our side... and as Paul says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)
  - c. It was on this path prepared by John the Baptist that Jesus took people who were unfaithful parents and grandparents, raising kids to be selfish and prideful, and made us into faithful parents like Zechariah.
  - d. And even more so, on this path prepared by Zechariah's son, Jesus took us... in all our sin and idolatry... and made us holy and righteous in His sight.
- V. **So, if you...and your family... want to know true glory, go to Jesus.**
- a. Nothing is better in this life than seeing the people we love go to the feet of Jesus for everything.
    - i. It doesn't mean giving up on dreams and doing the best we can... it just means that the song we sing is praise to the one who gave us His best.
  - b. God gives us so much more than anything this world has to offer, and Zechariah's song is a reminder...
    - i. The coming of the Savior means that all our enemies are defeated that might take us away from God...
  - c. Go to Him, the Lamb of God, who took all your sins upon Himself so that you could have the greatest treasures of all – forgiveness, life, and salvation. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sermon based on: "The Nativity: Songs of God and Men", series by Rev. Hans W. Fiene, Copyright © 2024 Concordia Publishing House