

HOPE RENEWED

--LUKE 1:5-25--

INTRODUCTION:

Over the next five weeks we will make our way chronologically through the events of the first advent of Jesus. We will focus on the events leading up to the birth of Jesus Christ, we will focus on His birth, and on those who witnessed His birth. As we do, we will see these words associated with the advent candles fleshed out for us.

Our journey this morning begins at a time that looked hopeless for Israel. God had been silent for 400 years, there had not been a prophet, a vision, a dream, or anything from God since the prophet Malachi. I can only imagine that many in Israel thought that God had abandoned them. No hope. But not everyone believed their situation was hopeless, there were still some who remembered God's promise to send a Messiah, and they retained the hope that He would keep His promise. Before looking at one such couple lets pray and ask God to open our hearts to the truth of His Word.

I. A FAITHFUL PRIEST (Luke 1:5-7)

- a. God was about to break the _____ years of silence.
- b. Not only was this couple from the priestly line, but Luke describes them as _____ and godly. (Genesis 15:6)
- c. They were faithful to God as they waited with _____ for His promises to be fulfilled.

II. A FEARFUL PRIEST (Luke 1:8-17)

- a. God always chooses the time and the place where he wants to _____ to us.
- b. During their week in which they ministered as the priests their different tasks were assigned to them by the casting of _____.
- c. Evening came and there stood Zacharias performing his duties and _____.
- d. The angel quickly assures Zacharias that he does not need to _____, his mission is not one of judgment; instead, it is one of good news.

III. A FAITHLESS PRIEST (Luke 1:18-22)

- a. Zacharias had just received wonderful _____ from an angel of God.
- b. The man should have been rejoicing, but at the moment of truth, Zacharias _____ in his faith.
- c. Zacharias wavering in his faith asks the angel for some sort of _____ that God's Word is true.
- d. The angel _____ Zacharias in a way that I am sure was not what Zacharias had in mind as an assurance.
- e. While all this was happening the people outside in the courts began to _____ about Zacharias and what was taking him so long in the temple. (Numbers 6:24-26)

IV. A FAVORED PRIEST (Luke 1:23-25)

- f. I am sure that Zacharias had a hard time _____ up his week of priestly service at the temple.
- g. The Scripture passage tells us that it came about as God's Word had said and Elizabeth became _____.

CONCLUSION:

Hope is the expectation of something that you have waited for is going to happen. In this history lesson about Zacharias and Elizabeth we find that hope, the expectation in the coming of the Messiah, the Deliverer promised all the way back in the garden of Eden 4000 years earlier. The hope that God's long-awaited promise was to be fulfilled; the hope that the time had fully come and God would intervene in this sinful world and provide an answer for sin that had entered into the world 4000 years earlier in the garden of Eden when Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in direct disobedience to God's command. Hope was renewed because God provided the world with a Savior who would die and take the punishment required for sin, whose blood was shed to pay the penalty for our sin, who would be buried and three days later would rise from the dead so that we by believing in this could be forgiven for our sin and made acceptable to God by the righteousness of His Son. We also find hope in the fact that God fulfilled His promise to send the Savior, which

gives us the faith to hope in Christ's Second Advent, when He returns as King and Conqueror. This is our hope.

But we cannot leave this passage this morning without drawing spiritual truth from it. This passage teaches us about faith and God's Word. God's Word is always trustworthy and can always be trusted. God's Word is the foundation of our faith, when we as God's children begin to question the trustworthiness of God's Word or ask for extra assurances that His Word is true, we are casting doubt on God's Word and showing that we do not believe it. This is what Satan did to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He cast doubt on God's Word when he said, "Did God really say..." When we do not in faith take God at His Word, we can be sure that God will discipline us to help us see that our unbelief and doubt are unfounded. Why does God discipline? Because He loves each of His children and He wants us to totally trust Him by faith. We have a whole history book of His faithfulness; we should trust it without question. God wants each of His children to be able to receive the blessings that come through believing and trusting His Word. Let's remember the judgment of Zacharias when we begin to have doubts about God's Word or His ability to fulfill His promises and to answer our prayers.