Luke 1:5-25;57-66 "Zechariah & Elizabeth: Believe & Speak Up"



Key Thought/Action: Even if we are living in "barrenness, let's believe God will do what He says, and let's' speak up in obedience.

Welcome/Prayer:

Review:

Pause in the study of Luke to look back at some characters in the Christmas account that might not show up in a nativity scene, but are whose stories are told for our benefit. (Advent children's time as well)

Intro:

- What barrenness meant in Jewical culture in Biblical times.
    - A woman & family's greatest misfortune and sometimes perceived as a curse
- How do I respond to "barreness" in my life? Do I have trouble believing God is for me, in ways beyond my imagination?

Scripture

Luke 1:5-25;57-66

- V6-7 upright yet barren
    - God sees, God hears prayer
    - Barrenness was significant because it seems Zechariah was still praying about it
- V11 God meets Zechariah where he is at. In this case it's in church.
    - God knows you. God has and will speak to you in your context.
    - Will you and I believe?
- V13 Zechariah's prayer was heard, wife will bear son, name him John.
- V15 This isn't a message on alcohol, but what does this say about the value of abstaining?
- V16-17 Urging people to love God and to love others. Shouldn't we have the same goal?
- V18 The question was real. In some ways the punishment helped to answer the question. His silence was a daily reminder that he could be sure of this.
- V20 Are there things we miss out on because we have not believed?
    - Why is Zechariah muted? To remind himself? To limit him in sharing his doubt? Elizabeth knew his name was to be John, so by writing or other means, Zechariah shared the truth of God's message.
    - Do I "wallow" in "barrenness"? Do I perpetuate doubt or faith?

    - To share my struggles or not? How do I portray God?
- V21 even early worship services sometimes went long :) (Hey, Zechariah, I've got lunch plans!) :)
- V24 5 months in seclusion, getting away, focus on God,
    - "barrenness" can reveal bitterness or trust
    - Elizabeth comes out <u>Thankful!</u>
        - Would you be thankful as an older woman :)
- V36-37 Nothing impossible w/God
    - Rich man, camel through the eye of a needle, Matthew 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
    - Abraham & Sarah Genesis 18:14 Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."
    - Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,
- V41 A physical confirmation that God was doing what He said.
- V43 … the mother of my Lord…
- V45 Again the importance of belief is emphasized in this account.
    - Do we get the message that, believing God will do what he says, is important?
- V55 Another reminder of God's faithfulness, just as He promised
- V60 Elizabeth knew his name was to be John. So, Zechariah found some way to communicate God's message to her.
    - Elizabeth spoke up in obedience to God, even if what He was asking her to do was not traditional or what was expected.
- V63 Zechariah's belief is now confirmed and given "a platform".
- V76 The Messiah is coming! My son John will help prepare the way! **I believe it!**

Example/Personal or Others:

▉ (see throughout)

Summary: Challenge/Application:

- **Even if we are living in "barrenness, let's believe God will do what He says, and let's' speak up in obedience.**

Benediction:

May we be filled with the growing faith of Zechariah, the courage of Elizabeth, the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the patience of Simeon, the thankfulness of Anna, the determination of the magi, and the peace and presence of the Christ child. May Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. Amen.