



LOCKINGCASTLECHURCH

Life Group Notes – 28th November 2021

Hearts prepared for the Lord. Luke 1:5-25

Please visit the LCC website to listen to the talk or read the transcript if available.

Luke 1:5-25 Zechariah and Elizabeth

⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

¹⁹ The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."

²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. ²³ When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵ "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favour and taken away my disgrace among the people."

Comment

Our focus is on verse 17 particularly on 'to turn the hearts of the parents to their children.' Zechariah and Elizabeth were a childless couple, promised by the Angel Gabriel that they would have a son even in their old age. He foretold that this child would be filled with the Spirit, going in the power and likeness of Elijah to bring back God's people Israel, turning the hearts of parents to their children. This part of the verse comes from Malachi 4:5 but only half of it is quoted here in Luke, why is that? Andy feels that the significance of this verse to us as a church is the call for us all to look after the 'orphans' in our community (James 1:27). The call is not just to be parents to our own children but to become spiritual parents to all, which can be a rare gift within church communities (1 Corinthians 4:15-16). We live in a society where the family is not as valued or protected, and many children come from broken homes and broken relationships. They need spiritual mothers and fathers to come alongside them. We all need our hearts turned to this important ministry to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Questions

- 1) Who has been a positive influence in your spiritual walk? What qualities did they have that helped you grow?
- 2) John the Baptist's call was to 'prepare the way for the Lord'. What preparation is really needed? (v16-17)
- 3) Part of the vision of the church at LCC is that each one of us will have a spiritual mentor and be a mentor to someone else. Have you ever considered being a mentor, or who might you ask to be your mentor and why?
- 4) There is a saying that 'it takes a village to raise a child', there is another saying that 'it takes a church to raise a parent'. How could we as a church come alongside each other to help each other fulfil Deuteronomy 6:4-12 for the children in our community?
- 5) How are you going to be a positive role model to the young people around you today?