

Five Tests of Our Faith

Sunday Evening, November 27, 2005

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Luke 1:57-80

This morning we heard the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth and their plight to have a child. God sent them an angelic messenger with the great news that they were going to have a boy named John who would prepare the way for the Messiah. Instead of responding with absolute faith in the miraculous power of God, Zechariah responded with doubt and demanded more evidence. We can't write him off as unspiritual for he was living a godly life and praying persistently in spite of a lack of answer from God.

It is often in times of silence that our faith grows the most. We are forced to say nothing, to attempt to explain nothing, rather simply to watch God at work.

"But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him." –Habakkuk 2:20

When Zechariah experienced the miracle, he confirmed it by naming his baby John. The people marveled and Zechariah got his voice back. He immediately employed it to give praise to God and to share with us some rather important spiritual truths. He sang what has since come to be known as *The Benedictus*.

FIVE AFFIRMATIONS FROM ZECHARIAH, FIVE QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY:

1. **"I believe in God's redemption and salvation!"** (vs. 68-69)
What do you believe about your eternity?

Zechariah uses two very important words in his song. One is the word "redemption." That word refers to the way in which God has actually purchased us back from the grip of sin, death, and eternal damnation. He has redeemed!

He also uses the word "salvation" which has to do with being delivered from some sure and terrible end. Zechariah was affirming God's ability to save and that God was now demonstrating his saving power to the Jewish people.

What do you believe about the saving power of God?

2. **"I believe in God's faithfulness to Israel!"** (vs. 70-72)
What do you believe for your nation?

God was promising freedom from oppression for Israel. He was honoring His Abrahamic oath (which I believe is in permanent effect)... **Genesis 12:1-3**

I don't believe you can take all the promises to Israel and just apply them to America, or any other nation for that matter. But there are some principles that we can draw from Scripture.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." –Proverbs 14:34

Knowing the truth that God promises to bless a righteous nation, what do you believe for America today? Can we have revival? Can there be a massive sweeping of the Spirit of God across the land?

3. **"I believe in the trustworthiness of God's promises!"** (vs. 73-75)
What do you believe about the promises of God?

Notice that Zechariah uses the words “oath” and “covenant” in his song. He is reminding everyone that his son’s birth and the proceeding Messiah should come as no surprise. God has promised this day long in advance and now God is simply being faithful to His Word.

What do you believe about God’s promises. It’s one thing to say “amen” when the preacher says that the Bible is God’s perfect Word. But your real heart-belief will be demonstrated as you claim God’s promises as your own and live your life on them daily.

4. Zechariah: “I believe in the future greatness of my son!” (vs. 76-77)
What do you believe about the next generation?

One of the wonderful things about the heroes of the Bible is the way in which they often interacted with their sons. They would pass on a “blessing” which is not just something you say before a meal or when someone sneezes. A “blessing” is a deeply spiritual word or touch that conveys worth and value. Zechariah said “I believe that my kid is going to be great!”

What do you believe for your kids? For your grandkids? For the youth of your church and your community? Don’t you believe they can do great things? If you do, when was the last time you voiced that feeling?

5. Zechariah: “I believe in the coming Messiah!” (vs. 78-79)
What do you believe about Jesus?

Zechariah knew the Old Testament promises of God and had spent his life waiting on their fulfillment. Now, before his very eyes, was that fulfillment. He proclaimed loud and clear his belief in One who would visit humanity, give light in the midst of darkness, overcome death, and show us the way to peace with God.

What do you believe about Jesus? Was He simply a good man, or is He God come to earth? Is He able to light up a dark world? Can He overcome death in your life? Have you followed Him on the way to peace?

How you answer these questions determines your spiritual outlook on life. If Jesus hasn’t been Savior to you, won’t you receive Him now by faith?