

**God's Message to Zechariah and Elizabeth:**  
***“Prepare for the Miraculous”***

*God's Messages to You, Part 1*  
Sunday Morning, November 27, 2005  
Pastor Brandon Cox  
Luke 1:5-25

The day after Thanksgiving, Angie and I often go battle the crowds, as we did this year. We even ran into a couple of you there. There is something I find amazing about the day after Thanksgiving and that is the focus with which most of the women shop. Have you noticed that when it comes to Christmas shopping, men find a bench somewhere but women often have this look of intensity? They are zeroing in on the purpose for which the day after Thanksgiving must have been given to us – to shop!

We often live life with a similar kind of focus. We pursue with intensity our daily grind. We get into the routine of living and we just live with full effort. Sometimes we get so focused on daily life that we forget to keep our eyes peeled for the miraculous. We need to open our eyes to the possibility that there is more to life than simply surviving. There is a miraculous level of living as well. Just as the children of Israel in the wilderness became hardened to the daily miracles of life, so do we.

The angel gave six specific promises to Zechariah in this passage:

- Your prayers are going to be answered.
- God has been gracious. (The name “John” means “grace of God”).
- You and your people will know joy and gladness.
- Your child is going to be great.
- Israel will see national revival.
- Your child is the forerunner to the soon-coming Messiah.

Zechariah doubted and responded by essentially saying, “Give me more evidence and then I will believe!”

This is much like the Israelites who crossed the Red Sea on dry land, then when Moses went to receive the Ten Commandments, they forgot God and shaped a golden calf. It's like the rich man who begged Abraham to send Lazarus back from the grave to witness to his brothers. It's also like Thomas, who demanded more than mere verbal affirmation but wanted visible evidence. All are cases in which people demanded more evidence than the plain promises of God.

*“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” -2 Corinthians 5:7*

## **HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE MIRACULOUS...**

### **1. Live life on call for God.** (v. 6)

Here's the amazing thing about Zechariah and Elizabeth (lest we should discredit them completely). Even though they weren't seeing anything miraculous, they were still living faithful, godly lives. Israel was in the midst of 400 “silent” years with no prophecy, no recorded angelic announcements, and no significant miracles to speak of. Yet here were two servants living faithfully.

When there is no fanfare, when nobody is watching, when there is little to look forward to tomorrow, do we continue living faithfully for God, ready to respond at any moment?

### **2. Refuse to let ministry become mundane.** (vs. 8-9)

There were approximately 20,000 priests divided into 24 courses of ministry, each serving two eight-day periods of time during the year. Each course consisted of about 830 men. To get to burn incense was a

once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Zechariah. It was a special occasion, but it was nothing compared to what God wanted to do in that once-in-a-lifetime moment. But Zechariah seems so into the momentum of doing his duty that he fails to realize the significance of the experience.

Ministry, if we aren't careful, may become mundane to us. The miraculous may become commonplace. We get to the point where we just go through the motions of life and we forget how significant it is to put flowers on the table, to visit the hospital, to sing in the choir.

**3. Keep praying with persistence.** (v. 13)

Here again is another great thing to notice about Zechariah. He kept praying in spite of the lack of an answer. Even though he and his wife were beyond child-bearing years, he kept praying for a child. He may have doubted the answer, but he had been on his knees in prayer, praying with persistence.

*A Lesson in Persistent Praying...*

**Luke 11:10** is written in a continuous sense. In other words, it literally reads "Whoever keeps on asking... keeps on seeking... keeps on knocking... will be answered."

**4. Believe that God's Word is enough.** (vs. 18-20)

Jesus condemned the religious leaders of His day because they demanded a sign. The problem is not that they were seeking to know God's will more assuredly, but rather that they were demanded more evidence than God's very own Word. This is really the crime of Zechariah. He hears the message of God through Gabriel and demands more.

So often we hear and understand what God is saying about something, yet we won't believe it until we hear more. We demand greater evidence than what God is willing to give. We must learn the simple truth that God's Word is enough. His say is the final say.

Kids often bargain with us. When we say "no" to something, they begin to reason with us or try to lay claim to some territory. We do the same with God. He says "yes" or "no" to something and we keep bargaining. We try to re-interpret His words or re-explain them for a new generation. In doing so, we often call into question the sufficiency of the Scriptures. But God's Word IS enough!

Zechariah was unwilling to believe in the clearly revealed Word of God concerning his future. What have you believed about God's promises to you of eternal life?