

Waiting on Peace

Week 2 The Humble Road

By Grace, Lyra, Josh, Natalie (Arise Students)

My name is Grace, and I'm a member of the youth. Horizons. And then I'm also usually in the nursery during services. But you can see me around usually.

So today I'm reading Luke one verses five through seven, which read:

“When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the Order of Abijah and his wife Elizabeth was also from the priestly line of Aaron. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.”

This passage kind of shows how Zechariah and Elizabeth were so faithful to God, even through their hardships, and they were true to Him, knowing His timing and being obedient to Him.

I think it's important to talk about what obedience means, because obedience in the Bible doesn't always mean following all the laws. It means trusting in Him and trusting His timing—even when we might not think it's the best option.

Sometimes we get busy in life, like I know I do with school and work and activities outside of school. I've struggled with that a lot, feeling overwhelmed. I used to just put God off to the side and act like He wasn't a priority. I just struggled with that a lot, saying I was too busy to read my Bible or too busy to pray.

I even remember so many nights crying on the kitchen floor, just feeling helpless because I didn't know what to do. I didn't know how I could fix it, and I wasn't even thinking about God in those moments.

I realized during a sermon that when I don't trust in God and when I don't make time for Him, it makes space between me and God—which only makes room for the devil to work through me. That just causes stress, unhappiness, and no peace of mind.

Now, when I get overwhelmed or have a lot to do, I make sure I do make time for God. I make time to read my Bible, pray, come to church, and stay active in the church. I volunteer. And now I have so much more peace of mind.

Sometimes I still get overwhelmed and stressed, but I still make sure there's time for God. I isolate time for Jesus. And I know that God is going to help me through all of that. I'm not in it alone. He will bring me goodness in the end.

So I ask you to follow God just as I have. Sometimes our lives get busy and sometimes it's difficult. Even if it's just reading your Bible every now and then, it's still important to make time for Him.

Thank you.

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Hello. Today we're going to be reading out of Luke verses 8–12.

“One day, Zechariah was serving as a priest before God because his priestly division was on duty. Following the customs of priestly service, he was chosen by lottery to go into the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense. All of the people who gathered to worship were praying outside during this hour of incense offering. An angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear.”

So, me and Zechariah actually have a lot in common. Last Sunday, I gave my first-ever message to a group of high school students. Let me tell you, there is nothing more terrifying than speaking in front of a group of teenagers—especially when they're your peers. Well, except for maybe speaking in front of an entire congregation full of adults.

So you might be wondering how I'm up here. I'll give you a hint—it has to do with this theme of peace we have going on here. Just like Zechariah was terrified, so am I. But also, like Zechariah, I have peace in God's goodness.

I'm up here because I believe that God's peace will keep me safe and help me speak His word. Trust Him. The Lord will be your rock when no one else is, so you'll never stand alone—especially not in this room. Ever.

Thank you.

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Zechariah was struck with fear when the angel entered the temple. He didn't know why the angel was there, but the angel reassured him, saying, “Don't be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to your son, and you must name him John. He'll be a joy and delight to you, and many people will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the Lord's eyes. He must not drink wine and liquor. He'll be filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth.”

Zechariah was initially overwhelmed not only by the angel's sudden appearance, but also by the promise he brought. He was reluctant to trust the angel's words, but he was calmed by the promise—not only of a son but also of God's plan for his future.

This perfectly captures the idea of peace. Peace is staying calm in the roughest of waters, trusting God to do what is right, and knowing that God will keep His promise.

Zechariah could be at peace with what was to come because of God's promise—and so can we.

We struggle in life when it seems like nothing is going according to plan. We start to doubt whether God even has a plan for us. We begin to ask questions. We start to lose faith. But God has a plan—for us to prosper, to succeed, and ultimately to strengthen His kingdom.

Though we may not know what is next, we can be at peace. We can be at peace knowing God is faithful and will always keep His word. We can be at peace knowing He is good. And if we follow where He leads, we will succeed in carrying out His plans for us.

So when life seems out of control, when it appears like there is no plan, remember: God has a plan. He knows what's next for us. We can be at peace knowing we all have a purpose in His kingdom—whether it's obvious or still being figured out.

As you go through life this week, know that not everything will be planned. Not everything will make sense yet—and that's okay. When you can't figure out what's next, remember: God has a plan for you, and His plan will guide you through the troubles you face. He hears your prayers. He understands your worries. He is always true to His word.

Knowing that He has a plan brings us everlasting peace.

Thank you.

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Hello. My name is Natalie, and I will be reading from Luke chapter one, verses 16–17:

“And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and the power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.”

In my words, the Scripture means that Zechariah was asked by God to turn people to the Lord with very little notice. God believed in him and knew he was prepared all along—even if Zechariah didn't believe it.

I've had times in my life where I wasn't prepared or ready. This summer, for example, I was volunteering at Camp Sunshine as an assistant counselor. One day, someone became ill, and I was asked to step in as a full counselor. I said yes, but I was not prepared at all. I was stressing, but also excited for the opportunity.

That night, I prayed and prayed because I didn't want to mess it up. But when the day came, it just came naturally—or at least I was told. I realized I would never have been prepared for that responsibility without God by my side.

Little did I know, I was prepared all along—because the people beside me knew God's love, glory, and power. They gave me peace throughout the day, reassuring me that I was doing great. They reminded me to trust God's plan.

If you take anything from this story, let it be this: God has prepared you for anything, whether you know it or not. And the people beside you can give you peace and reassurance—you can do the same for them.

So I encourage you to bring the people beside you peace and reassurance.

Thank you.

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“During the rule of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. They were both righteous before God, blameless in their observation of all the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to become pregnant, and they both were very old.

One day, Zechariah was serving as a priest before God because his priestly division was on duty. Following the customs of priestly service, he was chosen by lottery to go into the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense. All of the people who gathered to worship were praying outside during this hour of incense offering. An angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear.

The angel said, ‘Don't be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to your son, and you must name him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many people will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the Lord's eyes. He must not drink wine and liquor. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth. He will bring many Israelites back to the Lord their God. He will go forth before the Lord, equipped with the spirit and the power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and he will turn the disobedient to righteous patterns of thinking. He will make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’”

Let's pray.

Dear Lord, thank You for bringing us all here together today. Thank You for giving us the strength to speak, and for all the other speakers today. Thank You for giving us the ability to come and witness this worship together. Thank You for the beautiful weather outside, because I know I'm happy about it.

Amen.