

Season of Silence

Christmas often starts by untangling lights, hoping they light up. But 2,000 years ago, God untangled the world by sending us “the Light.” As we look at the stories of Jesus entering our world, we’ll discover how they are all stories of light.



INTRODUCTION

God’s groundwork to untangle the world involved sending John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus. Today’s message shows us how John’s father, Zechariah, responds to the news of God’s plan – and how his following period of silence made room for God’s light.

STARTER QUESTION

If, like Zechariah, you also were visited by an angel with news that your improbable hopes and dreams were to be fulfilled, what would your reaction be?

INTO THE WORD

Read Luke 1:18 and Luke 1:30-34. Both Zechariah and Mary question the angel when receiving God’s news. What are Zechariah’s consequences for his doubt? Why is he punished and Mary is not? What does *The Bible* say about doubt in general?

Read Luke 1:63-69. Compare Zechariah’s response to the angel’s news vs. his response to his son’s birth. How did the presence of God help Zechariah overcome his doubt, and why might it take a period of silence to achieve this transformation?

Read John 8:12 and Romans 8:11. God promises to be with us, even in the midst of trials. Yet, with this reliability comes unpredictability. What does this mean? What are some of your favorite Biblical examples of God’s reliability and unpredictability? How has he been reliable and unpredictable in your own life?

APPLICATION

Psalms; Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Zechariah’s Song (Luke 1:67-69): *The Bible* is filled with songs. Why do you think the use of song is significant? How has music factored into your relationship with God?

Scriptures tell us that God became flesh because certain things cannot be communicated from a distance. God has done everything to close the distance between Him and us; yet there are ways we create distance. Discuss how we create barriers – even inadvertent ones. What steps can be taken to close the distance, so we can hear God speak?

Although we may not have a visit directly from the angel, Gabriel, what might our consequences be for not trusting God?

PRAYER

In closing, repeat Zechariah’s prayer with a heart of gratitude and sincerity: “May the merciful God enter the holy place and accept with favor the offering of His people.”