



## March 23, 2025 Sermon Study Guide Mike Haynes – Reaching the Next Generation

<sup>5</sup> When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. <sup>6</sup> Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. <sup>7</sup> They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

<sup>8</sup> One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. <sup>9</sup> As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup> While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

<sup>11</sup> While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. <sup>12</sup> Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. <sup>14</sup> You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> He will be a man with the spirit and 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."

<sup>18</sup> Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years."

<sup>19</sup> Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! <sup>20</sup> But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time." (Luke 1:5-20 NLT)

## A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word.

### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

#### **1. The Tension**

- How might working with the next generation expose “some unhealthy stuff” within us?
- What events from the past have bubbled to the surface from your own childhood with your own children or with students in your classroom, sports team or \_\_\_\_\_?
- Share your story and how did you respond as those past experiences came into view?

#### **2. Luke 1:5-7**

- When have you experienced God's silence in your life, either real or perceived? How did you navigate that silence?
- How did you think about God during that time and did you go to Him even when He seemed as if He was distant?
- What do you think Zechariah was doing as he waited in his God imposed silence?

#### **3. Luke 1:8-20**

- What promises did the angel make to Zechariah?
- Why might Zechariah have had trouble believing this news? What surprised you by his doubts and questions?
- When have you struggled to believe a promise of God and why did you doubt?
- What other thoughts and feelings might Zechariah have experienced as the Angel spoke and the events unfolded.
- In what ways do you identify with Zechariah's doubt in what God could do?
- How might he have struggled over the years as he watched his son grow and be mightily used by God?
- What disappointments, insecurities, or wounds is God exposing in your answers here? How will you respond?

#### **4. So, what do we do with this new way of viewing the story in Luke 1?**

##### **Talking with God about the next generation.**

- Make a list of the young people that God has placed in your life.
- Now consider if you spend more time telling God what they need to do differently or are you asking Him what He has to say about them?
- Where do you imagine that He is and will be using them for His glory?
- What and who do you need to look at in a new way?

#### **5. Invite the Holy Spirit to uncover and heal your wounds.**

Think again about the insecurities and wounds that have bubble up in your life, particularly though your relationship with kids and teens.

- How have you responded to these revelations about you?
- Where has God silenced you? Where is he inviting you to grow?
- Will you take an honest look at what he is showing you? Invite God into those spaces to help you heal today. Invite a trusted friend or mentor to walk the journey with you.

## **WALKING IT OUT**

Zechariah's story picks back up when Elizabeth's baby is born and Zechariah proclaims his name to be John, just as the angel told him. *Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God... And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit...* (Luke 1:64 and 67)

- God exposes our wounds not to shame but to heal and restore us. Instead of burying your hurt, will you actively invite God to help you work through it and move toward healing? What was true for Zechariah is also true for you!
- Where do you sense God calling you to believe Him and invest in the next generation as a parent, teacher, coach, mentor, or volunteer?