

Zechariah

Elizabeth

Reflections to Share,
Journal and Ponder

Chapter 7: An Incredible Announcement

Luke shows us in this narrative that there can be long periods of time between the initial expression of the prayers of our heart, our prolonged periods of “waiting,” and God’s surprising ways. God’s long-term plan is to remake our character and reveal His glory. Yet our short-term desire is often for immediate gratification and prompt removal of trying circumstances. Obviously, these are two very different and conflicting objectives! Luke also tells us something about God’s nature and His ways in this story. We see a God who is utterly faithful yet, at the same time, totally unpredictable in his reliability!

We also learn from Luke’s narrative that God sometimes uses enforced periods of silence, both for our benefit and His glory. Often He does this to get our attention (again). Frequently it seems as if His purpose is to interrupt our preoccupation with the trinkets and pursuits of this world. That way He can draw us to Himself once again, so that we can more clearly hear His voice to realize afresh and anew that we truly are His beloved.

- If you had been Zechariah, how would you have felt when you were finally selected through the lot-casting process?
- Can you relate to Zechariah’s state of hearing but not really listening? Being so preoccupied that you miss much of what’s actually being said?
- God’s time frame and Zechariah’s time frame of possibilities are certainly not the same. Can you relate to that from your personal experience? Can we totally trust God and rest in the fact that His timing is perfect while our notions of time are not?
- Have you ever felt that you have waited too long, or were waiting in vain? Felt that time, history, and maybe even God, had passed you by? Did those experiences allow you to imagine what might have been going through Zechariah’s mind when he heard this sudden, surprising announcement?
- Has intentional solitude and silence been a part of your life? Do you set aside time to attentively listen to God’s “still small voice?”
- Someone once observed that the word “illness” (in English) is totally contained within the word “stillness.” What insights might that suggest? Have you ever experienced how God can take a time of “illness” in your life and redeem it into a time of “stillness” with Him? How about a period of prolonged unemployment? What was God teaching you during those times? What did you learn about listening? Where do you need to grow in learning to listen?
- Have you ever experienced a time of God’s “imposed silence?” Was it an opportunity to refocus and be still before Him? What was God revealing to you during that time?

Ponder

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. *Proverbs 16:33*

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. *Isaiah 55:9*

Be still and know that I am God. *Psalms 46:10a*