

# Repentance to Joy

# Two miracle babies

- *“And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.”* (Luke 1:36–38, ESV)
- John the Baptist was conceived in a woman who was believed to be barren.
- Jesus was miraculously conceived even though Mary had not had sex with a man.

# Mary went to see Elizabeth

- *“In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.”* (Luke 1:39–40, ESV)

# We digress

- *“In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.”* (Luke 1:5–7, ESV)
- A Priest
- A wife from a priestly line
- They were righteous as people can get
- Elizabeth was barren (infertility or deadness of the womb)
- They were “advanced in years” (Old)

# Chosen, how much closer could you get?

- *“Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.”* (Luke 1:8–10, ESV)
- *“But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the LORD who were men of valor, and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the LORD God.””* (2 Chronicles 26:16–18, ESV)
- Zechariah was considered as close to God as you could possibly get

# Must not have been a normal occurrence

- *“And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.” (Luke 1:11–12, ESV)*

# Instructions from God's Messenger

- *“But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”” (Luke 1:13–17, ESV)*

# The attitude of your questioning (doubt) can have consequences

- *“And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.” (Luke 1:18–19, ESV)*
- *“And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.” (Luke 1:20–23, ESV)*

# God took away Elizabeth's shame

- *“After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.””* (Luke 1:24–25, ESV)

# Back to Mary and her faith

- *“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.””* (Luke 1:41–45, ESV)

# Zechariah agrees with God

- *“Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, but his mother answered, “No; he shall be called John (Jehovah is a gracious giver).” And they said to her, “None of your relatives is called by this name.” And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And they all wondered.” (Luke 1:57–63, ESV)*

# From bitter barrenness, to words of blessing

- *“And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God.” (Luke 1:64, ESV)*
- *“And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”” (Luke 1:67–79, ESV)*

# Even if you feel bitter and barren, God says otherwise!

- **Our Sin debt is paid, once and for all**
- “So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” (Hebrews 9:28)
- **We have been justified (It is, as if we haven’t sinned)**
- “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” (Romans 5:9)
- “being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed...” (Romans 3:24-25)
- **We are forgiven (Our sins have been put away)**
- “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7)
- **We have been spared from God’s wrath (God will not punish us according to what we deserve)**
- “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” (Romans 5:9)
- **We are being spiritually healed; one day even my flesh will be replaced with an incorruptible body**
- “But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” (Romans 8:10–11)
- **We are cleansed**
- “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)
- **Through Christ, we have the power to overcome the enemy**
- “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.” (Revelation 12:11)
- **We are no longer under the curse of the law**
- “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”).” (Galatians 3:13)
- **We have been reclaimed from the enemy**
- “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephesians 1:7)
- **We have been brought close to God**
- “...that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:12-13)
- **We have been declared righteous**
- “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- **We have entered into a new covenant**
- “Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:20)
- **Our redemption is imperishable**
- “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- **We are free (We don’t have to be led by our sin nature)**
- “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1)
- **We are freed from a conscience defiled by guilt**
- “let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:22)
- **We are no longer condemned**
- “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1)
- **We have been set apart from the world (declared holy to God)**
- “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)
- **We can enter boldly into the holiest of holies (God’s presence)...and live**
- “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and *having* a High Priest over the house of God. let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure