



Key Scripture: Luke 1:1-25, 67-79

Can you think of time when it seemed like everyone had “something” except for you? Maybe it was a certain brand of shoes, a certain haircut, or phone. Maybe you feel that way right now. I remember when I was a teenager [\[Insert your own story or item here.\]](#)

But let's take it to the deep end. Maybe for you it's something less superficial. Maybe your dad isn't in the picture, or your parents are divorced, or a grandparent has passed away. You can't believe the way some of your friends talk about how annoying their family is or how they don't want to drive to such and such a place so far away for the holidays because when you would give anything to have what they do. How does it feel when you are longing for something or praying for something and you feel like year after year goes by with no answer? I want to show you in the Bible someone who felt like that.

Today we are kicking off a four-part study in the Bible called “The Original Christmas Carols.” Did you know there are four songs in just in the first few chapters of Luke in the Christmas story all sung by different people? And they aren't “Oh Holy Night” or “Silent Night” even though those are two of my favorites. For the next few weeks leading up to Christmas we are going to see what God has to say to us about Himself in these songs. These are the OG Christmas carols. What are your favorite Christmas carols? Shout them out!

So, who is the vocalist of the first of our original Christmas carols? Who was it that felt like everyone had the thing they wanted most?

Open up your Bible with me to to Luke 1:1 and let's find out.

1Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. 2They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. 3Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, 4so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.

First to set the stage, Doctor Luke wrote both the book of Luke and its part two, which is the book of Acts. He was determined to seek out all the facts about Jesus and write them down. Let's keep reading to find out the first vocalist in one of the top two greatest historical events ever!

5When 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. 6Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. 7They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

So, Elizabeth was barren; infertile. She wasn't able to have kids. But why God? She and Zechariah were *righteous*, in right relationship with God. They were careful to obey everything God told them to do. They were both from the priestly tribe of Aaron. That was a really important job mediating God's forgiveness for all of Israel's sin via a very complex system of sacrifices and rituals. Shouldn't good things happen to good people?

Yet, they had no child to go home to, no one to share stories with, kiss goodnight, and no one to take care of when they would be unable to care for themselves. This was a big deal back then. There were no nursing homes. There was no Medicare. And can you imagine year after year seeing all your friends get married, get pregnant, potty train, get pregnant again, send their sons off to Jewish school to memorize the Torah, to see their own children grow up and get married and have children of their own, to become grandparents? Not Zechariah and Elizabeth.

This part of the Scripture doesn't tell us their feelings, but you can imagine their grief. Maybe you know someone who wants a child, and it seems like everyone else around them is getting pregnant.

The first thing I want to teach you today from this part of the Christmas story is:

1. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous, but "the rain falls on the righteous and unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45)

Suffering is a part of life in a broken and fallen world. Bad things happen to everyone. Many of us are unaccustomed to suffering and very

uncomfortable with it here in the West where things are affluent, but the rest of the world sees a lot more death, violence, poverty than we do. But the truth is, it still hurts. Life is hard. But we have a God who has not forgotten us.

[Leader note: tell a story about a time suffering made you question God.]

So now that we have the stage set, let's continue so we can get to the song.

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

He still went to work. In his suffering and pain, He was doing the job God gave Him to do. And for Zechariah, His job was literally facilitating the worship of God and the forgiveness for God's chosen people in the Temple.

You can learn more about the details of his job description in Leviticus. I highly recommend you look back at it later because the Old Testament is the whole backstory building to the climax of Jesus' birth here in Luke.

Is your suffering holding you back from what God has for your life? God has a purpose for your life, right now, in the thick of it. You are not alone in the universe. God is knocking on the door of your heart. He is enough for you. He wants to get you up on your feet and get you back to the work He designed you to do. Many people say, "I don't believe in God because of pain in this world." To which I would ask, why do those two things have to be conflicting statements AND so what? If you choose not to trust in God, what hope do you have? There is still going to be suffering. In Jesus, we have hope, both now and in eternity. God has work for you to do. Get up and get to work.

*11While **Zechariah** was in the sanctuary, an **angel** of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. 12**Zechariah** was **shaken** and **overwhelmed** with **fear** when he saw him. 13But 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.** 14You will have **great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice** at his birth,*



Main Points:

- 1) Jesus came to fulfill the law because we could never keep our end of the covenant.
- 2) Simeon was moved by the Spirit.
- 3) God kept His promise.
- 4) Jesus would deliver truth not only to those in Israel but also to the Gentiles.
- 5) Jesus came with a sword to divide. The thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.
- 6) Get ready for Jesus’ second coming like Simeon waited for the first.

Connect:

-Have everyone share a high and a low from the week and any prayer requests they might have. Depending on how much time you have, consider setting a timer for 1-2 minutes per person.

Ice Breaker:

- What’s the most beautiful thing you’ve ever seen?
- Share any incredible rescue stories you have heard?
- Tell a story time someone did or did not keep a promise to you.

Scriptures: Luke 2:21-40 (29-32)

Ask a couple students to read this passage out loud for the group. Have everyone turn in their Bibles to the verses and highlight or underline them to help them begin to engage with the Bible.

Discussion Questions: *Don’t feel like you need to get through them all.*

- Simeon was moved by the Spirit like a magnet to the temple to the baby Messiah, Jesus. How have you been moved by the Spirit, not just emotionally but to do something?
- Why was Israel waiting for comfort? Why was Jesus that comfort? How do you need comfort today?
- How did Simeon say Jesus would be received? What was his job? World peace? Political overthrow of Rome?
- If Jesus looked inside your heart, what would He expose?

- Explain your understanding of the “Old Covenant” and the “New Covenant.” What makes the New Covenant better than the Old?
- How did Jesus uphold both our end and God’s end of the Covenant?
- What promise of God do you need to stand on right now?
- How is the Holy Spirit at work around you? How could you join Him?
- What did you learn about Leviticus, circumcision, and sacrifices regarding childbirth from the Bible?
- What questions do you have about baptism?

Challenge:

1. Jesus came for all nations. Pray for someone this week that you would least expect to accept Jesus as the Messiah.
2. Confess your sins directly to God this week and let the blood of Jesus wash over every sin. Rest in the fact that He has forgiven you.
3. Stand on a specific promise from God this week.



Key Scripture: Luke 1:26-55 (46-56)

Hey students!

Intro series

Recap Zechariah and Elizabeth

This week we are going to hear Mary’s song.

Have you ever been amazed that you or someone you know was picked for something? The Price is Right.

In a sense this is what happened to Mary. She had to sing a song back to God in praise.

Luke 1:26-34

She was “confused and disturbed.”

Mary said, “but how can this happen?” There was a twinge of doubt there.

1. Doubt and faith are not opposites.

Don’t throw Christianity away because you have questions or doubts.

Luke 1:35-38

2. Mary is humble. She knows God knows best.

We live in a part of the world where our personal rights have become paramount amongst most things.

Mary didn’t say...

She was humble enough to recognize that God is boss.

And you might not realize the cultural implications of this angel telling her all these things that are going to happen. But Mary knew what this would mean.

3. Do whatever God wants you to do, no matter the consequences.

[Leader Note: Tell a quick story about a time you gave something up or were persecuted for your faith. Consequences of good choices.]

Luke 1:39-56

Ya'll God chooses each of us for certain purposes! Obviously, Mary was chosen for an incredible purpose. But God has chosen you for a specific purpose too.

What has God created you to do to bring Him glory?

Mary glorified God in her song. Not herself.

How could you give God glory instead of yourself for your talents, possessions, experiences, popularity, etc.?

Mary was just the vessel. There wasn't anything extra special about her.

Share the gospel.

Application:

1. Marvel that God picked you to be His child.
2. Set your mind now to do the thing God wants you to do, not what you want to do. Feelings aren't bad, they just don't make good bosses.
3. Have faith no matter the cost.

The Original Christmas Carols! Let's pray.

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