

(Luke) 05 - Unbelief-Turned to Faith

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores the theme of certainty through faith in Luke's Gospel, highlighting the contrast between unbelief and faith, and illustrating the principle that unbelief is turned to faith through silence, tradition, age, and humility.

Duration: 47:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 1:5-23, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 1:57-80

Topics: "Faith And Doubt", "Gods Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the first chapter of the book of Luke. He highlights the theme of certainty through faith and how this chapter serves as a transition from a period of silence from God to the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist. The preacher emphasizes the faithfulness of God and how Zacharias' doubt and subsequent punishment of being mute and deaf for nine months illustrate the importance of trusting in God's promises. The sermon also mentions the importance of praising and rejoicing when God shows up in our lives.

Transcript

One, if you would, once again, we're looking at this wonderful gospel of Luke. Luke presents our Lord Jesus as the Son of all mankind. In chapter 1, verse 4, if you'll just glance at that verse for a moment, Luke tells us one of the reasons that he wrote this gospel.

And in verse 4 it says, Luke was writing to his friend Theophilus, which means the lover of God. Luke wrote to this lover of God in order that he might know more fully, that he might be assured, that he might have certainty in his heart. Anyone who studies the gospel of Luke with his heart on the Lord will come out of that study more sure, more convinced, more confident, and deeply assured than he was when he went in.

And so we're studying this in order that we might have this great certainty. Now in our discussion, we've introduced the book. By the way, if you haven't been here for some of our lessons and you're interested in following along, that's one of the reasons we have a cassette tape here.

Lillian keeps track and she'll make all the duplicates. So if you want any of the tapes, just see her and she'll give them to you. And there's no charge for that.

We just want you to keep up and follow along. In our discussion, we finish our introduction and we've come to this first chapter. In fact, we've been on this chapter several weeks now.

Now, we've summarized the heart of chapter 1 in these three words. Certainty through faith. Certainty through faith.

I attempted to show you last time how this chapter is a transition chapter. God had been silent for 400 years. No word, no prophecy, no dream, no vision, no oracle, nothing.

Heaven has been silent. And now Luke chapter 1 is the transition chapter. For the first time, God speaks after 400 years.

And what He says is right before us and this is what we're studying. It's not only a transition chapter in the sense that it ties the Old and the New Testament together. It certainly does that.

But it's also a transition between Jew and Gentile. I called attention to the fact that Luke was the most Gentile, the most non-Jewish writer in the New Testament. And everything about his book, well, I say everything, I don't mean that.

Almost all of his book is Gentile, except the first two chapters. You don't have a book in your New Testament more Jewish than these first two chapters. Because it's a transition.

And he's taking us from the Old to the New, from the Jew to the Gentile and the whole world. And in order that we might have it in an intensely practical way, I've taken the Old and summarized it with the word unbelief. I've taken the New and summarized it with the word faith.

And so he begins the gospel contrasting unbelief with faith. The Old with the New. Now if you'll just glance at Luke chapter 1, you'll see that there are two stories in Luke chapter 1. The first is the story about Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth.

And these are going to be the parents of John the Baptizer. And in chapter 1, verses 5 to 23, we have the first part of their story. And then the chapter ends also with their story.

Chapter 1, verse 57, all the way to the end through verse 88. And then in the middle, we have this second story. The Annunciation to Mary.

The Virgin Mary receives word from Gabriel that she's going to become the mother of the Son of all mankind. And so those are the two stories. Now when Zacharias, the father of John the Baptizer, heard the word from Gabriel, he responded in unbelief.

Come on. Okay, is there another chair? Bill, I'll hold a couple of chairs. Okay.

Bill's coming to the rescue here. Okay. Thanks, Bill.

When Zacharias received the word from Gabriel, chapter 1, verse 18, it says, And Zacharias said to the angel, How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. According to the Bible, he responded in unbelief. When Mary received a similar word from the same angel, look at verse 34, please.

And Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I am a virgin? You see, it looks like they asked the same question. How can it be my wife is old? How can it be I'm a virgin? And yet, we read that one was asked in unbelief, and the other was asked in faith. God can see the heart.

God sees the difference. Evidently, Zacharias had this in mind. Give me a sign.

Prove it. This is impossible. Mary, on the other hand, believed it and said, How? How are you going to do this amazing miracle? She believed it, but wanted to know the means.

Wanted to know how God was going to accomplish it. So, Zacharias gets blasted for unbelief, and Mary gets credit for this beautiful faith. I presented this last time that I feel like Zacharias not only represented himself in unbelief, but being an old priest, he sort of represented the whole old system.

All of Judaism. And the unbelief of Zacharias was the unbelief of Israel. The faith of Mary was the faith of the church and the introduction to all that's coming.

Here's the simple outline in chapter 1. I told you the message is certainty through faith. Well, you'll see how it's outlined. The first 25 verses, unbelief.

And then through verse 55, faith. And how does the chapter end? And the answer is verses 56 to 80, unbelief is turned to faith. And so you see the spotlight of the Holy Spirit underscoring this great message of faith.

Unbelief, Zacharias. Faith, Mary. And then unbelief is finally turned to faith when Zacharias finally comes to believe the Lord.

Now, so far we've looked at the unbelief of Zacharias, and last time I introduced the faith of Mary. And what I'd like to do is sort of summarize the faith of Mary, and then look at those last verses, 56 to 80. Unbelief is turned to faith.

We won't get to it this morning, but then even after we finish that, we won't be finished with chapter 1. There are still some dangling, interesting things that we need to discuss from the chapter. I'm going to ask you to follow along in your Bible as we begin reading from verse 26. In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin, engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming in, he said to her, But she was greatly troubled at this statement and kept pondering what kind of a salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, He will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He'll reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.

Mary said to the angel, And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And for that reason, the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age.

And she who was called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, In your New Testament, there are seven great pictures of the church. It's not important that you remember them, but let me just machine gun them to you.

The seven pictures of the church. I'm going to start with the second one, not the first one. The human body is a picture of the church.

Christ is the head, we're the members. The temple is a picture of the church. The building, he's the foundation, he's the cornerstone, we're the living block.

The bride is a picture of the church. The family is a picture of the church. The candlestick is a picture of the church.

The New Jerusalem is a picture of the church. But the first picture of the church in the Bible is not the body, the temple, the bride, the family, the candlestick, or the New Jerusalem. The first picture of the church is the Virgin Mary.

God intended it that way. God wrote it that way. Now how is Mary a picture of the church? If I answer these two questions, I think you'll see the principle quite easily.

Number one, what is Mary's chief contribution to the history of redemption? And the answer is, Mary gave Christ to the world. That's her chief contribution. She gave Jesus to the world.

The second question is, how did she do that? And the answer is, the Holy Spirit, by a mighty miracle, formed Christ in her. By her permission, and without the help of man. And then the Christ that was formed in her was gradually manifest, and in the fullness of time, Christ was given to the world.

Now, take those answers and apply it to the church. What's the mission of the church? And the answer is, to give Christ to the world. It's the church's mission, it's the Great Commission, to give Jesus to the world.

How do we do it? Same way Mary did it, in principle. The Holy Spirit forms Christ in us, by our permission, and without the help of the flesh. And as Christ becomes manifest in us, in the fullness of time, we give Christ to the world.

And so in that way, Mary becomes the great picture of the church. How to give Christ to the world, by letting the Holy Spirit form Christ in us. Incidentally, she further illustrates the church in that, that way, that process.

Identified her with Jesus, and also the reproach of Christ. We went through that last time. She took a beating, you know, just on the level of earth, for identifying with the Lord.

There's no way to explain it. You come home and say you've been made pregnant by God. Nobody's going to believe that.

And nobody believed Mary. And all the way through her ministry. Later in life, the Pharisees, when Jesus was rebuking them, they said, we were not born of fornication.

He carried that reproach all the way through. And there was no way that she could explain that. And so when we identify with Christ, we're also outside the camp.

And though we're godly and holy, and pure before God, the world doesn't seem to understand that. And we take a rap for that. When we closed last time, we had homed in on the specific illustrations of Mary's faith.

In other words, her child-likeness, in that without a precedent, she believed God for a new thing. God had never done that before, and she just took the simple step of faith and believed it. And then, secondly, she also submitted her surrender as something to be studied.

And that wonderful verse 38, Behold the bond-slave of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word. What a precious summary of total surrender. Usually when we surrender, we surrender to the Lord and say, alright, from now on, I'm going to do for you, God.

I'll give everything. I'll do for you. That wasn't Mary's surrender.

She didn't say, I'll do for you. She said, be it done unto me. And she was willing to let God do His thing.

And that's a different direction altogether. And finally, we saw the humility of Mary. You know, after this great privilege she was given, she sort of dies out of the picture.

Only two other times did she mention that she ever said anything in the Bible. And it wasn't of great significance, the things that she said. And so, she's just so humble.

And Christ took over and all we see is Christ. And so she's a wonderful picture of the church. Alright, having said that, let's look at our new material.

Look at the end of the chapter. Zacharias had been guilty of unbelief, but now, by God's goodness, his unbelief will be turned to faith. Let me read the record and you follow along.

Verse 57, The time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her, and they were rejoicing with her. And it came about on the eighth day, when they came to circumcise the child, that they were going to call his name Zacharias, after his father.

And his mother answered and said, No, indeed, he shall be called John. And they said to her, There's no one among your relatives who's called by that name. And they made signs to his father as to what he wanted him called.

And he asked for a tablet. And he wrote as follows, His name is John. And they were all astonished.

And at once his mouth was opened, his tongue loosed. And he began to speak in praise of God. And fear came on all those living around them.

And all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. Let me set this up again, just so that we'll all be going in the same direction. Let me show you his unbelief.

What Zacharias did when Gabriel told him his wife was going to have a baby, basically he said, Prove it. Give me a sign. This is impossible.

She's old and I'm old. In verse 18, when he said, How shall I know this for certain? He was asking for a sign to prove it. Well, you know the record.

He got his sign, didn't he? Verse 19 and 20. And the angel answered and said to him, I'm Gabriel who stands in the presence of God. I've been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

Behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place because you did not believe my word which shall be fulfilled in the proper time. Zacharias was made both deaf and mute as a sign of his unbelief. His tongue was tied in his mouth so he could not speak and his ears were stopped up.

Some just look at verse 20 and say, It looks like he was only mute, that he couldn't speak. The Greek word there can be used for both deaf and mute. Also in verse 62, later on when they tried to communicate with him, they had to use signs because he couldn't hear.

He was both deaf and mute. The ear that wouldn't hear couldn't hear. And the tongue that wouldn't praise now couldn't praise.

For nine months he was mute and he was deaf as a sign of his unbelief. Now why was that an appropriate chastening? There's a principle here. Now I speak as a fool, but why didn't God just break his leg? Or why didn't God just wither his arm or something like that? Why this particular judgment? I think there are several reasons, but one of them is that God was illustrating a tremendous Bible truth.

Let me give it to you first as Jeremiah stated the truth, and then as Paul stated it, and I'll try to illustrate it. In Jeremiah 2.17 we have these words, Have you not done this to yourself by forsaking the Lord your God when he led you in the way? Haven't you done this to yourself? And then verse 19 says, Jeremiah 2.19, Your own wickedness will correct you. Your own apostasy will chasten you.

The Apostle Paul said it in these words in Galatians 6, Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. I believe God chose deafness and muteness because in unbelief, Zacharias asked for a sign. He said, I want to live by sight.

I need a sign, I need evidence, I need proof. Now I feel like I can speak with a little authority on this because God has blessed our family with quite a few deaf people. Lillian's brothers and their wives are deaf or hard of hearing.

My son is deaf, profoundly deaf. His wife is profoundly deaf. So I know a little bit about the deaf.

And I know this much, that all the deaf live by sight and by feelings. They have to, because they can't hear. They live by sight.

You see, unbelief cries, I want to live by sight. God said, really? Let's try it for nine months. Let's see if you really want to live by sight.

And what God did was He put him in the place where he would see the bitterness of having to live by sight and by feelings. The physical illustrates the spiritual. And so he had to feel the burden of his own unbelief.

God doesn't come in our lives and then just dump a special chastening on us. Usually what we suffer is a byproduct of our own choices. And we bring what we suffer on ourselves, and there's connection between the tragedy and the offense.

I've experienced, I won't get into some of the details on this, but I've seen in my life, very often, how God let me have my own way until it made me weary. And I just wished I'd never asked for my own way. And sometimes God does that.

That's one of the ways of the Lord. And so suffering's appropriate. Usually we suffer from what we are.

Anyway, the time had finally come when unbelief was going to be turned to faith. If you glance at verse 57 to 59, it was at the child's circumcision, eight days after his birth. Now the reason that they named the child at the circumcision was based on Genesis, when God changed Abraham's name the same day He instituted circumcision.

And so they just picked that up. That's the time that we'll name the child, is at the circumcision. The Jews had a custom that there had to be at least ten people present to verify a circumcision and an entering in to the covenant of God.

Verse 58 says that the neighbors were there and the relatives were there, and we know there were at least ten people, probably a lot more if they're as old as they are and their relatives accumulated at the same rate mine do. Probably a lot more people there. Now the Bible doesn't tell us when Zacharias started to believe.

I wonder if he believed as soon as the angel cursed him. I wonder if he believed as soon as he couldn't speak and he couldn't hear anymore. I wonder if he believed when he saw that his wife became pregnant.

I wonder if he waited until the last minute to make sure it was a boy and not a girl. The Bible doesn't tell us exactly when he believed. We know, verse 20 says, until the day these things take place.

And so that takes us right up to the circumcision. Now, so that we don't just touch facts and miss life, for the sake of analysis, let me give you four simple truths connected with unbelief turning to faith. Every time unbelief turns to faith, you'll find these four things take place.

The first is this. When unbelief is turned to faith, silence is turned to praise. Boy, is that ever illustrated in this story.

This is the great benedictus, the great song of Zacharias. Now, if you analyze this song, we're going to do that next time a little bit. He's praising God for salvation.

Oh my, when he sings this song, he's thrilled with God's salvation. Unbelief had tied up his tongue, but now he's free to praise the Lord. Let me illustrate one of the things that make this faith so remarkable.

First of all, we're dealing with older believers. In verse 18, Zacharias said, My wife is advanced in years. That's a special Greek word the Jews use.

They never use that expression, advanced in years, to anyone under 60 years old. That had to be over 60. One Jewish rabbi who commented on this passage made the comment without documentation.

I hate when they do that. But without documentation, Zacharias was 99 years old, and Elizabeth was 89 years old. I don't know where they got that.

But I took the average then. They were somewhere between 60 and 100. Now, we don't know how old they were, but they were up in years.

They were veterans. They were believers. Now, put that together with this word, tradition.

An old faith and tradition. We talk about some old people being very set in their ways, established, doing things the old-fashioned way. Why do you do it that way? Why, it's the talk of the ancestors.

That's why we do it that way. Whatever age that is where you get set in your ways, I've reached it. Lillian assured me of that.

We were discussing this earlier. She says, you are more set in your ways than anyone I've ever met. I won't, sometimes she'll say, let's go home this way.

No! Don't take a different route. I know the old route. We're going to go the way that I know.

I remember the problem I had moving from my typewriter to the computer. Oh, I resisted that. I didn't want to do that.

And I've actually got some friends now who are still at it. They want me to get rid of my library. Why, you can do it on the computer.

I'm not about to get rid of my books. So, anyway, set in their ways. Now, the reason I mention that is because there's a tradition mentioned here.

Verse 59 to 61. There was a tradition to name a child after somebody in the family. Strangely enough, it was more after the grandfather than the father.

But to keep the name in the family, especially in a priestly family, they were sticklers on names. And so they say in verse 59, it's clear. Everybody gathers together.

His name will be Zacharias. Case closed. Talk of the ancestor.

That's tradition. That's convention. That's the more, Jewish custom.

Now, you add to that people that are elderly and so set in their ways and a tradition that's been established through the years. And then add to that verse 58. Neighbors and relatives in a united voice lining up with the tradition.

They're saying, alright, don't break tradition. Name this child according to the tradition. Think of the miracle involved for an old person set in their ways to go against tradition when their family and all their friends and their neighbors are saying, keep the tradition.

That's exactly what happened here. And it illustrates the wonder of this miracle. According to verse 60, his mother answered and said, no indeed, he shall be called John.

Elizabeth knew what Gabriel told Zacharias. In chapter 1, verse 13, it says, you'll give his name John. Why I can't speak.

Let me tell you what happened. And he explained it evidently and said his name will be John. Some don't agree with that.

Some say, Ed Miller, there's no proof of that. When did Zacharias tell her that? Some believe that at the circumcision, Elizabeth came to know the same way Zacharias came to know by the power of God. And then all of a sudden it came to her, his name is John.

I don't know if it came then or if he told her. I don't think that's the important thing. I think the important thing is this, that they obeyed God.

We sort of read these things la, la, la. But there's a tremendous step of faith here. In verse 63, he asked for a tablet.

That was just a little wooden board with wax over it. That's how they did it in those days. They had a stylus and they'd scratch it out in the wax.

And he wrote as follows, his name is John. And the Bible says they were astonished. Verse 64, at once his mouth opened, his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise to God.

Now I'm not saying tradition is wrong. It's mentioned 12 times in the New Testament, the word tradition. Seven times in an unfavorable sense.

Five times in a favorable sense. There may be nothing wrong with tradition unless there's a clear word from God, like Zacharias had. Zacharias was told from heaven, his name will be John.

When you have a clear word from God, you've got to go against tradition. Doesn't matter what your neighbors say. Doesn't matter what your relatives say.

It doesn't matter how you feel about it. If there's a word from God, you have to go in the face of tradition. And so this was part of his faith, daring to believe God's word over tradition, even when there was a united stance against him.

In that connection. So God opens his mouth, and it's precious to see when God does that, especially, I think, in an older saint. Older saints sometimes just walk according to the traditions, and that's not bad.

But oh, it's glorious to see when God does something special in their life, and then they begin to praise the Lord. I don't know how many of you saw the promise keepers thing on the TV this week, or what you thought of it. I'm not bringing this up to pass any judgment on it, but to mention a comment that Coach McCartney said.

He was being interviewed, and the interviewer said, how will you know if this has been a success? The coach answered it in four words. He said, if God shows up. That's how he measures if it's a success.

The reason I call attention to that is Zacharias' mouth was closed for nine months in unbelief. And then look at the first thing he said. Verse 68, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.

He has visited us. Do you know what that means? It means God showed up. And wasn't it a precious thing that as soon as God shows up, you've got to praise.

You've got to rejoice. Your mouth has got to be open. Praise is the first change that takes place when unbelief is turned to faith.

It's praise. It's adoration. No matter how old we are, no matter how steeped in tradition we may be, no matter how many oppose us, when God shows up, something happens in here.

And when something happens in here, something happens here. And we begin to praise the Lord. Our mouth is open with a benedictus.

Praise is the first evidence of unbelief being turned to faith. Let me give another principle. A second principle of life illustrated when unbelief is turned to faith is simplicity.

This is so simple here. I want to illustrate this because I was so badly burned in my own Christian life. And I've heard others express similar things.

And that is, it's so hard to come back to God. Once you've had unbelief, once you've failed, once you've messed up, it's such a struggle to move from unbelief to faith again. From anxious doubt to certainty and assurance.

Some people think, oh, it's going to take a lot of heart searching and a lot of confession and repentance and restitution and a lot of Bible reading and a lot of prayer and some counseling. Oh, it's far simpler than that. Far simpler than that.

How difficult is it to write the words His name is John? That's how easy it is to move from unbelief to faith. When he wrote those simple words, His name is John, in that moment, his mouth was filled with adoring wonder and praise. Why did God tell him to name him John through Gabriel? Why not Pete the baptizer or Fred the baptizer? We laugh, but if it was that, that would be as common as could be.

I think it was more than to illustrate the crossing of traditional lines, though I think that's part of it. In those days, names meant something. They had meanings to their names.

Some try to use all of these names and tell a spiritual story. For example, Zacharias means God remembers. And Elizabeth means God is faithful.

And John means the gift of God. And Jesus means Savior. And so they take all those together and say, God remembers His covenant, and God is faithful, and God gives a gift, and Jesus is the Savior.

And they try to pull it all together. I'm uncomfortable with that. Trying to find meanings of names and trying to find spiritual truth underneath.

Sometime when God calls attention to it, like when He changes Abram's name to Abraham, or Jacob's name to Israel, or Osea is changed to Joshua, then we know to pay attention to those names. Otherwise, I say, why didn't they interpret Mary's name? See, Mary's name means bitter. They don't know how to squeeze that into the spiritual meaning of the thing here.

Or Simeon's name. Simeon means the Lord knew I was hated. I even put that in.

And so they just take the names that mean something. We know for sure that God named John before His birth, and God named Jesus before His birth. And both of those have a meaning.

Jesus, of course, means Savior. And John just means the gift of God. Alright, let me tie this back to the record.

How simple is it to move from unbelief to faith? How easy is it to write His name is John? How simple is it to move from unbelief to faith? It's as simple as receiving a gift. That's what John means. The gift of God.

Or some say the grace of God. To just receive the grace of God. Often coming back to the Lord is no more difficult than going back to where we disobeyed and then obeyed.

And that's exactly what happened here. God not only said you're going to have a baby, but verse 13, you will name Him John. That's part of the obedience.

And as soon as he obeyed God, his mouth was open. I know many Christians have stumbled in one specific area of disobedience. And then they flounder around in their Christian life.

Come back and obey God and that's it. And you'd be amazed how God will put joy into your life. A third observation.

Not only praise, not only simplicity, but restoration is illustrated here. I like to word it this way and say not only was Zacharias restored and fully restored, but he was restored to higher usefulness. That's a Bible principle that goes all the way through Old and New Testament.

When God restores you, He actually brings you back to a higher plane than you were before you fell. That's part of the grace of God. No sooner is this man restored and the priest now has a new ministry, he becomes prophet.

And so now Zacharias is prophet and priest. Now we'll see the details of that prophecy when we study the psalm. But I want you to see that God immediately brought him back.

There's no trial period. There's no probation. There's no shelf.

I was taught in my early Christian life to believe God had a shelf. And if I messed up, I missed it. I'm going on the shelf.

And God's going to put me on the shelf and He wouldn't use me anymore and that I would have to settle for believe this or not, God's second best. See, God has a best and God has a second best. I guess He must have a third best too.

Well, I announce to you, brothers and sisters in Christ, God does not have a second best. He only has a best. He has a will and that will is good and perfect and acceptable.

And at any moment in my life, regardless of my past, I can be the exact Christian God wants me to be. And no matter how I've flubbed up in the past, at any moment when I turn in simple faith to Christ, I can have the perfect will of God. There is no shelf.

And it's wonderfully illustrated here that Zacharias was restored to a higher plane. Completely restored. I don't know if Elizabeth and Zacharias praised God before this.

We have no record of that. But oh my, it's wonderful to see them praising God after the restoration. When you fall, and it doesn't matter if it's a moral fall or just a spiritual doubt, when you fall and God chastens and God deals with you, you are humbled through that pain.

And when you come back, you're actually stronger and more careful than you were before you fell. And you're raised to a higher plane. They're far more spiritual after this fall than before.

Alright, one final thought and we'll wrap it up and then maybe pound it home a little more next time. Not only do we praise God, not only is simplicity illustrated, not only is restoration underscored that we're restored to greater usefulness, but the faithfulness of God is illustrated here. Remember, there are two parts to Gabriel's message.

The first part had to do with the baby's birth and name. The second part had to do with the baby's ministry. Zacharias only fell on the first part.

He didn't fall on the second part. He fell not believing that God could do the miracle and give his wife a baby. But listen to him when God opens his lips.

In verse 66, they ask, what then will this child turn out to be? And that's when he goes off into his song. He says, let me tell you. I'll tell you what Gabriel told me and I'll tell you more besides.

He believed God. And you know why he believed God? He believed God because when he didn't believe God, God was faithful to do it anyway. And when you mess up and God does it anyway, you're encouraged next time to believe part two.

And when he throws the pass the first time and you fumble it and he throws it the second time and you fumble it, and then you realize you fumbled it but he caught it. And he ran for the touchdown and then he throws it to you again. When he throws it to you again, you're more apt to catch it.

And that's because God has been so faithful. And now God was faithful in the past when he was unbelieving and so now he took a present encouragement to trust God in the present. Well, those are some of the principles illustrated by this unbelief turned to faith.

There's praise, there's simplicity, there's restoration, there's the faithfulness of God. But we're not finished at all with looking at this. I want to close with this last verse, verse 65.

It says, Fear came on all those living around them and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth, they didn't try to witness. They didn't try to evangelize.

They weren't soul winning. They're not trying to be missionaries. They're just parents who've been given a gift of a baby.

They were unbelieving. They came back to faith. They're trusting the Lord now.

They're just living. And by living, their testimony has gone out. And the Bible says it went out into all the land.

They didn't try to do anything except live. But when God moves in your heart and puts praise in your heart, and you begin to trust God and believe God, everybody around you is going to take notice. Especially if believing God calls you to rush through some old tradition that has moss on it.

And sometime God will use that in a mighty way. So there was a great testimony. We're not finished with chapter 1. We still need to see the Holy Spirit in chapter 1. It's amazing.

Especially in John the baptizer in the womb, filled with the Holy Spirit. I'd like to talk a little bit about that and talk about the relationship between Elijah and John and the Lord Jesus and His ministry as a Nazarite. There's other things we want to talk about.

But we'll pick that up next time. Comments or questions? Well, I think unfortunately, Elizabeth, with all women, Elizabeth with all women, were not highly regarded in that day. And so when they turned, they were just sort of ignoring her and turning to the Father and saying, alright, let's have the real decision here.

But I think it had to do with how women were treated. Never thought of that. She had to be the spokesman because he couldn't talk.

Forgot about that. Yeah, they were resisting. And it's also true that God sometimes has to tell us more than once.

Other comments or questions? Thank you. Well, let's bow. Let's bow before the Lord.

Our Father, thank you so much that you've illustrated how unbelief can be turned to faith. Lord, we hate it when we doubt. But sometimes we do.

Thank you that you've made it so easy to come back. That you fill our hearts again with praise. That you actually lift us up to a higher plane.

Thank you for being so faithful when we were unbelieving. Will you work these principles in our hearts and in our lives. And by your good grace, bring us back again that we can fellowship around your Word and learn your Father.

We ask in Jesus' name.

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