



DATE: December 20, 2009

TEXT: Luke 1:57-80

TITLE: "Christmas Lessons from Luke III: The song of Zechariah"

This morning I want us to look at the "song of Zachariah's. At the birth of his son, John, Zachariah, who had been deaf and unable to speak for 9 months, burst forth into praise of God and prophecy about John. John the Baptist twice is the forerunner of Christ. He was the forerunner of Christ's birth and he was the forerunner of Christ's ministry. John the Baptist had one essential task.... he was to prepare the world for Jesus Christ. We will look this morning at the necessary preparations for Christ's entrance into the world and the necessary preparations needed for Christ's entrance into our lives. 2000 years ago the Jewish nation was awaiting a messiah. But there was a problem. They completely misunderstood the nature of the messiah. They were awaiting a king of Israel. They were awaiting a mighty warrior who would lead them in their rebellion against the Roman oppressors. Instead, they received a baby in the manger. John the Baptist came to begin the process of understanding. I want us to look at the prophecy of Zachariah concerning John as see 3 important understandings needed for Christ to enter the

world and to enter our lives.

Understanding # 1 We need to understand that Christ entering our lives is part of a process. Allow me to read verses *69-70 and verse 73 READ.*

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), the oath he swore to our father Abraham:.

Christ entered the world after a 2000 year process. It began with Abraham, it continued with Moses, with David, with all the prophets, and with John the Baptist and it culminated with Jesus Christ. And I believe we need to understand the process did not cease 2000 years ago.

The process of God continues today. God took 2000 years to prepare the world for the birth of Christ. He continues to prepare the world for the return of Christ.

It is also true that Christ enters our lives in a process. I have shared before that I became a Christian in my Senior year in High School. But this was a culmination of a process. When I was a child my parents sent me to Sunday school for a couple of years. I still remember Mrs. Riley and Mrs Wolf. I remember my grandfather, when I was 8 years old scolding me. I was frustrated and used the expression “Jeez” over and over again. Grandpa simply said... “Dougie,

that is shortening the name of Jesus. We are to honor Jesus not use his name as a swear word.” I never habitually swore again.... and I discovered that my grandfather honored the name of Jesus, Our relationship with Christ, like all relationships is a process.

I remember a number of years ago my wife was teaching the nursery class in Sunday School. She would often say to me **“I don’t know if they learn anything at this age... maybe I’m just wasting my time”** I said... yes they are. It is a process of learning. It’s a process of acceptance.

This is also important to realize when we are looking at our own Christian walk. We do not get instant power and maturity in our spiritual walk. Our growth as Christians is a process, often it does not appear that we are moving at all when suddenly we notice that we are empowered in a new and rich way by the Holy Spirit.

A number of years ago I went to Niagara Falls for dinner. We decided to go into the Skylon tower. This is the tower on the Canadian side that towers over the Falls. It is unique in that it spins. I remember sitting at a table looking down at the Falls and marveling at the sight. I

than turned my attention back inside the restaurant and conversed with friends. I remember looking out the window again and being surprised. The scene had completely changed. We had moved. You do not feel the movement... and for a brief moment you forget where you are and the change surprises you. In our walk with Christ we need to remain faithful. We need to continue to practice our spiritual habits. We need to continue to worship. We need to continue to go to Sunday School and bible studies, we need to continue to have our daily devotions. We need to continue on our Christian service. Most of the time it will not seem that we are moving. Often we will feel that we are in a rut. But every once in while we are able to look up. Every once in a while we are able to see that we are closer to our Lord. Preparing for Christ is a never ending process.

Understanding # 2 For Christ to enter the world and for Christ to enter our lives we need to allow ourselves to be channels for God. John the Baptist was a channel for the word of God.

We see this in *verse 76* of our text. READ.

**And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him**

John was a channel for truth. We need to be channels of truth.

I am a Christian because two men chose to be a channel of truth. As I shared before I did not grow up in a strong Christian. Except for a couple of years as a child in Sunday School... and the influence of my Grandfather.... I did not know the Good News of Christ. Two men..... Lloyd and Bill shared the good news with me. I remember hearing the story of the Cross for the first time. I remember the excitement of faith these men shared with me. We need to be channels of living water. Always moving. It is easy to become discouraged and to stop. As I said in my first point much of our lives is not a time of excitement and drama. Most of our lives is the daily routine. It is critical that our daily routine involves moving with Christ. Spiritual stagnance causes spiritual death. Prepare for the birth of Christ by taking the steps in your life necessary to being movement.

Finally, understanding # 3 We need to understand that Christ enters the world and enters our lives as a person... not as a religion or a philosophy. *READ verse 76-77.*

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the

Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

God did not send a book to the world. God did not send a voice and say “hear this and obey my words” God sent a person. God sent first John the Baptist and then Jesus Christ.

I have a theology. If I had to label myself I would say I am an Evangelical, Reformed, Calvinist. On Sunday evenings a number of years ago we studied the Book of Revelation and I have told people that I am a non-dispensational amillennialist. These label have some meaning. But I am not going to preach on them. I am not a Christian because of my reformed theology. The fact that I am an amillennialist is not very important. I am a Christian because of my relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. Let me say I am not saying we do not need to grow in our knowledge of Jesus. We do. We certainly need to grow in our knowledge, understanding and application of God’s Word, the Bible. We do. Scripture is clear that where there is not vision... where there is no knowledge the people perish.... but we are saved by a relationship. I could sit at the feet of God and discover that the dispensational, Armenian, premillennialist Baptists are right. I won’t care a lot. I will rejoice that I am in the presence of our Lord and I

have a love relationship with our Lord. Christianity is a relationship with a real person.

Christmas is now 5 days away. Are you ready for the birth of Christ. I don't mean is your shopping done. I don't mean are your Christmas cards out. I don't mean are your meals planned. Are you prepared for Christ to be in your life? Are you in relationship with the living Savior? Is your faith growing or is it stagnant. Stagnancy is never the will of God. Are you walking in the will of God? God is present. The Holy spirit is here.... are we prepared to receive Him?

AMEN