

December 17, 2023

This Christmas: Finding Forgiveness

Scripture: Luke 1:57-80

Big Idea: This Christmas we find forgiveness as we declutter our Christmas to focus on Jesus.

The Challenge: It's easy to forget, or even worse, be inoculated to the message of Christmas. We get wrapped up in family drama, the perfect decorations or gifts, and find ourselves stressed and busy trying to do all the Christmas traditions. Zechariah's interaction and subsequent song about Jesus, points us in the right direction, reminding us about the person and work of the coming Messiah.

Pastoral Prayer for this Message:

Awe, wonder, and joy would come as we focus again on who Jesus is.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Lookout 1: Zechariah vs. 62-64

- Zechariah is positioned as a religious and pious man and yet is a skeptic about God's plan and activity. What does this say about maturity in Jesus, and still getting things wrong?
- How do you respond when you experience failure, mistrust, or disobedience to God? (See Zechariah's response in vs. 64). Is this your response?

2. Lookout 2: Zechariah's Benedictus vs. 68-75

- "Benedictus" is the Latin word to describe vs. 68. What does it look like to give God praise? How have you praised God this week?
- The reason for redemption (vs. 68) is service (vs. 74). God saves for service. What does whole surrender look like for you in your current season of life? What area of your life are you hesitant to serve God with/in?

3. Lookout 3: John and Jesus vs. 76-80

- *John's Message* (vs. 76-77) – What does forgiveness feel like? Can you remember the last time you asked Jesus to forgive you of your sin?
- *Jesus' Ministry* (vs. 78) – The incarnation of Jesus is a divine mystery. What does it say about God that He has come to you? How does this shape your response?
- *Jesus' Effect* (vs. 79) – Peace is total well-being because of being in harmony with God. Are you feeling the peace of God in your life right now? Why or why not?

Application:

- Missionary David Brainerd said, "I hardly ever so longed to live to God and to be altogether devoted to Him. I wanted to wear out my life in His service, and for His glory." John the Baptist's life was fully devoted to making Jesus known (see John 3:30). Could this be said of you currently? What is stopping you from full surrender?