

Sending Jesus: How God Brought His Son to Earth
Sermon 2: "The Challenge of Unanswered Prayer"
Luke 1:5-25

God uses ordinary people, with ordinary issues and struggles, to accomplish His eternal purposes.

Luke 1:13 (ESV)

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."

You can count on God to answer your prayers ...

1. When you are faithful to God, and you wonder, "Who notices?"

Luke 1:5 (ESV)

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.

Luke 1:6 (ESV)

And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

Psalms 34:15 (ESV)

The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears toward their cry.

Psalms 34:16 (ESV)

The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Psalms 34:17 (ESV)

When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

Psalms 66:18 (ESV)

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Psalms 66:19 (ESV)

But truly God has listened; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.

2. When you are calling on God, and you wonder, "How long?"

Luke 1:7 (ESV)

But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Luke 1:8 (ESV)

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty,

Luke 1:9 (ESV)

according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

Luke 1:10 (ESV)

And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.

Psalm 6:3 (ESV)

My soul also is greatly troubled. But You, O Lord—how long?

Psalm 74:9 (ESV)

We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long.

3. When you are waiting for God, and you wonder, “What’s next?”**Luke 1:11 (ESV)**

And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Luke 1:12 (ESV)

And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

Luke 1:13 (ESV)

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.

Luke 1:14 (ESV)

And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,

Luke 1:15 (ESV)

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.

Luke 1:16 (ESV)

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,

Luke 1:17 (ESV)

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.”

4. When you are uncertain about God, and you wonder, “How so?”

Luke 1:18 (ESV)

And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”

Luke 1:19 (ESV)

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 1:20 (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.”

Luke 1:21 (ESV)

And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.

Luke 1:22 (ESV)

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.

Luke 1:23 (ESV)

And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

Luke 1:24 (ESV)

After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying,

Luke 1:25 (ESV)

“Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

John 5:24 (ESV)

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.