

## Trust God's Promises

Announcements can be good or bad, captivating or dull, expected or surprising, routine or life-changing. We are usually notified of news pertaining to local and world events in real time. The announcements contain information that is aimed at the general public. Sometimes, however, we are singular recipients of spectacular news that is obviously above what we deserve. We are shocked to be the first to know of a first kiss, an engagement, a pregnancy, a birth.

In the opening chapter of the Gospel of Luke, we find two grand announcements delivered by an angelic messenger (Lk 1:5-56). The angel Gabriel proclaims the soon-to-come births of two enigmatic characters the Old Testament has been promising for centuries. These two individuals have simply been referred to as the forerunner and the Messiah. And while the hope of their arrival has long been anticipated by God's people, the recipients of its fulfillment - an old priest and a young girl - were anything but extraordinary. The old priest, Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth, were barren and past child-bearing years, while the young girl, Mary, was "a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph" (Lk 1:27). They couldn't have been more different. Zechariah was a respected, dutiful temple priest, while Mary was an obscure girl from a mocked town (Jn 1:46). Furthermore, in a twist of irony, the dedicated priest was struck dumb for his feeble faith, while the young girl received gracious praise for her submissive trust.

So, why would both Zechariah and Mary have been privileged to receive these glorious announcements? Why would these ordinary and obscure, accomplished and inexperienced, doubting and trusting, old man and young woman, be chosen by God to become parents of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ respectively? **What qualifies them to be part of God's plan? Nothing. You heard right. No-thing! God blessed Zechariah and Mary by His gracious love. He does the same for us.**

God blesses and uses us according to His good purposes. We need not fear (Lk 1:13, 30), because the Lord is at our side. His promises are true and certain. Even when our life has been marked by disappointment and our faith is wavering, our prayers have been heard and recorded (Lk 1:13). Be encouraged! God's grace has never been reserved for the unbreakable, the perfect, and the strong. It is precisely our frailty, finiteness, and weakness that require us to trust God and make us usable in His mighty hands. We must always remember, it is about God and not about us.

***2 Corinthians 4:5-7 (ESV) - "For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But **we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.**"***