

'Finding your voice'

Lessons for the lead in to Christmas

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come to His people and redeemed them ..." (Luke 1.68)

Luke begins his account of the life and ministry of Jesus with an extended narrative leading up to His birth. The 'prequel' to the birth of Jesus is Luke's record of an elderly couple, Zechariah and Elizabeth, with whom the Lord has remarkable dealings.

The threads of their story are carefully woven into the narrative of the birth of the Lord Jesus Himself and provide important lessons for ourselves, which we'll consider over the weeks of Advent.

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2. Working from home

".. remained in seclusion .."

Luke 1.23-25, 39-45

The elderly priest was muted: and now, it seems, he had to 'work from home'. Luke's focus now shifts onto his wife, Elizabeth, and her response to the Lord's gracious dealings.

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1. **Read Luke 1.23-45 & 56.** Although we're concentrating on the vv.23-25 & vv.39-45, it's worth reading the whole passage to appreciate fully the ministry Elizabeth exercises.

What have you found hard, and what have you found good about being tied much more to your home this year?

How would you describe the ministry which Elizabeth exercised? What lessons might we learn today from this?

2. Read Luke 1.23-25. As the Lord had promised through Gabriel, despite being 'well on in years', Elizabeth became pregnant; she was quick to recognize that the Lord Himself was at work.

As she reflected on her situation what was Elizabeth's take on her pregnancy?

To what extent do you interpret what happens in your own life in the light of the Lord's activity?

3. Read Luke 1.39-41. Six months into her pregnancy Elizabeth received a visit in her home from her 'relative' (v.36) Mary: she experienced the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Why do you think Mary travelled that significant distance to visit Elizabeth?

The activity of the Holy Spirit was clearly important to Luke: in what ways are you conscious of the activity of the Holy Spirit in your life?

4. Read Luke 1.42-45. Elizabeth is constrained through the Holy Spirit to fulfil the priestly role in place of her mute husband and pronounce a blessing on Mary.

Why did Elizabeth pronounce this blessing on Mary?

In what ways or contexts do you think the Holy Spirit might mean to use you to speak His blessing on others?