

JESUS IS
“Trust Him” Luke 1:5-25
September 21, 2025

INTRO.: Welcome to our second message in our series, **JESUS IS**, from the gospel of Luke. When you think of the word, *“trust,”* what comes to mind? Who do you think of when you hear this word?

This morning we’re going to look at the need of every follower of Christ to trust God and to act on that trust. To do this we’re going to look at Luke 1:5-25. This is the account of the angel Gabriel announcing to Zechariah that his wife, Elizabeth, was going to have a son, whom he would call John. What was amazing is that she had, up to this point, been unable to have children, and now her and Zechariah were quite old.

Luke 1:5-25 In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. **6** Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commandments and regulations blamelessly. **7** But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years. **8** Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, **9** he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. **10** And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. **11** Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. **12** When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. **13** But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. **14** He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, **15** for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. **16** Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. **17** And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” **18** Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.” **19** The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. **20** And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.” **21** Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. **22** When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. **23** When his time of service was completed, he returned home. **24** After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. **25** “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

We’re going to look at 5 things this morning concerning Zechariah, Elizabeth, and this angel. These include: Their Standing (v. 5-7); God’s Sovereignty (v. 8-10); Their Supplication (v. 11-17); His Skepticism (v. 18-22); and Her Praise (v. 23-25). How does all of this relate to trusting God?

THEIR STANDING **v. 5-7**

Luke 1:5 In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.

It is significant that we know who the king was at this time.

From John MacArthur: Herod was not a Jew, although when he began to rule, he wanted to win the favor of the Jews. He married a woman who was a member of a very wealthy and prestigious Jewish family. He went about rebuilding the temple (still ongoing during Jesus’ ministry), built the fortress of Masada, lowered the taxes twice, and during a famine he even melted down gold objects from his palace to buy food for the poor. He was so popular with some Jews that they formed the pro-Herod party called the Herodians (Matt. 22:16; Mark 3:6; 12:13). Like the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the Herodians were enemies of Jesus (Mark 12:13). As nice as all this seems, he was also ruthless, cruel, and vicious, and very jealous of anyone he suspected of trying to usurp his power. He murdered his wife, her brother, her mother, and several of his own sons.

His savagery, brutality, and jealousy reached an apex in Matthew 2; where we read the account of the Maji who came to Herod asking, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?” He told the Maji that when they found this king,

“As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” The Magi were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they went another way back to their country. We read Herod’s response in Matthew 2.

Matthew 2:16–18 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. **17** Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: **18** “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

This is important background as we read about Zechariah and Elizabeth’s character in Luke 1. What do we know about their background? Zechariah (means “Yahweh has remembered”) was a priest and, as a priest, he was to represent God to the people and bring people to God by offering sacrifices in the temple for their sins.

Luke 1:6-7 Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commandments and regulations blamelessly. **7** But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

They were *upright* or *righteous* in the sight of God. Did this happen because of their own power or righteousness in and of themselves? It is only through their faith. Unlike many of the Pharisees, who’s righteousness, was in appearance only; Zechariah and Elizabeth’s righteousness was in the sight of God. How did their standing before God affect their lives?

They are described as “*observing all the Lord’s commandments and regulations blamelessly*.” Because they were righteous in the sight of God they “***observed***” (present tense participle: to live, to walk) all the Lord’s commandments and regulations.

As you continue to read and study through the New Testament what happens when a person comes to faith in Christ? As God the Father looks on that person He sees the righteousness of Christ.

Philippians 3:7–9 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

1 John 2:3–6 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. **4** The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **5** But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: **6** Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Yet, even though they faithfully walked with God, they didn’t escape heartache.

Luke 1:7 But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

Many looked upon this as sign of divine punishment. Elizabeth would refer to this as a *disgrace*, at the end of this chapter. Yet, they continued to live for God and walk in His ways. What happens when you and I face disappointment or hardship even though we are trying to live in a God-honoring way? The second thing we see is:

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

v. 8-10

Luke 1:8-9 Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, **9** he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

Five times a year Zechariah left home for the temple. During the three major Jewish festivals (Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles) all priestly divisions served at the temple as pilgrims swelled Jerusalem’s population. Each priestly order or division had two other weeks a year when they carried out the daily temple sacrifices and rituals. (Trent C. Butler)

Since there were so many priests, to be chosen by lot to go into the temple and burn incense was a huge honor. Because of the number of priests many would never have this honor. One of the responsibilities of the priests was to keep the incense in the temple burning continually. In the temple there was the holy place and then a curtain, and behind the

curtain was the most Holy Place (Holy of Holies). The High Priest, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for his sins and the sins of the people. It was said that the High Priest had bells on his robe so the people outside would know he was still alive for if he had sin in his life, he would die. The altar of incense was located just outside the Holy of Holies so the priest would not spend too much time there lest he do or say something dishonoring to God. While the priest was offering incense the worshippers gathered outside would be praying. Since Zechariah took longer than usual the people outside would be wondering what was going on.

“The incense smoke represented the people’s prayers of repentance, confession, and thanksgiving, for the coming Messiah, the peace of Jerusalem, the nation, family, salvation, and for the coming kingdom. Thus the incense represented the people’s dependence on God (1 Chronicles 29:12), their submission to Him (Deuteronomy 27:10; 1 Samuel 15:22-23), and acknowledged His sovereignty over them (Psalm 103:19).” (MacArthur)

The priest would be chosen by lot. What does that mean? Lots were sacred objects of unknown shape and material that would give a yes or no to questions or select one person over another. (Butler)

Even as they used “lots,” the results were controlled by God. We see the “casting of lots” mentioned various times in the Bible.

Who was responsible for the awful storm: Jonah 1:7 Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

Choosing an apostle to replace Judas: Acts 1:23–26 So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. **24** Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen **25** to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” **26** Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

The reason Zechariah was in the temple wasn’t because of chance or good luck. He was there by God’s appointment and God had a special message to deliver to him. This is a reminder to each of us that God is sovereign over the events of our lives, and we need to trust Him even when the circumstances may be extremely difficult and painful.

I’m reminded of Joseph, from the Old Testament, and how he was mistreated by his brothers (sold into slavery and reported dead to their father).

Genesis 50:19–21 But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? **20** You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. **21** So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

We see their standing before God, God’s sovereignty, and thirdly:

THEIR SUPPLICATION

v. 11-17

Luke 1:11-12 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. **12** When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.

You can only imagine Zechariah’s reaction when he saw the angel standing there. I wonder what was going through his mind. Maybe, “What have I done?” We read that “*he was gripped with fear,*” which literally means “*fear fell on him.*” He responded like any one of us would have responded.

The angel says what angels say in other places in the Bible when they appear to people.

Luke 1:13 But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. **14** He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,

“*Do not be afraid Zechariah:*” this is a command. The angel has some very good news to deliver.

“*Your prayer has been heard:*” This is great news! God hears the prayers of his children. Are you a child of God? Even as a child of God, we need to remember that Bible tells us there are things that hinder our prayers. If you and I have unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18), husbands, if you treat your wife poorly (1 Peter 3:7), and if we are not walking with God.

What prayer has the angel heard? While he was offering incense, Zechariah was probably praying for God's people, for the redemption of God, but he was also probably praying God would give them a child. It was a prayer he and Elizabeth had uttered many times, but God had not seemed to answer. What prayer is it for you? Maybe you've prayed for a child, a mate, your marriage, a wayward child, the sickness of a loved one, and the list could go on.

"Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John."

The name John means "God is gracious." Even in the angel's announcement Zechariah is reminded of the grace of God in this answer to prayer. Anything we have from God is by His grace. None of us have earned or deserved His favor, His goodness shown to us. This wasn't the expected name because it wasn't a family name.

Then the angel begins to describe this child and the role God has for him

Luke 1:14-15 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.

*He will be a joy and delight to you

*Many will rejoice at his birth

*He will be great in the sight of the Lord

*Never to drink wine

*He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth

This is big news!! Can you imagine the excitement at the news? But the angel doesn't stop there.

Luke 1:16 Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God.

God is going to use him greatly! Wouldn't that be a huge answer to prayer for parents who know Christ as Savior and Lord? Our prayers for our sons have included that they come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, that they love Him with all their heart, soul, and mind, that they live for Him no matter their profession, that they marry a woman who loves Jesus, and they raise their children to know and love Jesus. Your children can be highly successful in their job, but if they don't love the Lord and live for Him the success is hollow. We are so grateful for how God has continued to answer our prayers for our family.

Luke 1:17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

This had to be the answer of Zechariah's prayers. He should be jumping up and down with joy. God has answered their prayers!!!

HIS SKEPTICISM

v. 18-23

This sounds too good to be true. Gabriel, don't you know we have many challenges? What you're saying is impossible!

Luke 1:18-19 Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." **19** The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

Angel, let me explain to you why this can't be. The angel's response was basically, "Do you know who I am, where I have come from, and who sent me?" I am Gabriel, I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to tell you this good news.

The word, "*good news*" is the Greek word "euangelizo" (to announce good news) and would have been familiar to Gentiles as it was used to express joyous news. It is used elsewhere in the New Testament (11 times; 10 of those in the Gospel of Luke) to proclaim the good news that God sent His Son to die for the sins of all who believe in Him. (MacArthur)

The angel tells Zechariah this great news. His response, "Are you sure?" Who is the author of doubt? What were the consequences of his doubt?

Luke 1:20 And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.”

He missed out on the joy of being able to tell people what he saw and heard until after the birth of the child. People were outside wondering what was taking him so long and when he came out he couldn't tell them.

Luke 1:22-23 When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. **23** When his time of service was completed, he returned home.

When you and I doubt God, His Word, and His promises, we miss out on the joy we can have in our lives and the joy we could share with others. Are you and I willing to trust God?

This account reminds us of Zechariah and Elizabeth's standing (because they were righteous before God they lived like it), God's sovereignty (I can trust he is in control), their supplication (God answered their prayer and we need to make sure we don't give up praying), Zechariah's skepticism (no circumstance too difficult for God to answer prayer, doubt brings a loss of joy), and lastly:

HER PRAISE

v. 23-25

What was Elizabeth's response?

Luke 1:24-25 After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. **25** “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

God has done this!! She fell on the grace of God. What do we do when God answers prayer? Do we give all the glory to Him? Sharing answers to prayer with those who don't know Jesus is an opportunity to be a testimony of God's grace and mercy in our lives. How has God answered prayer in your life? Shout it out!!

SO WHAT??

*How is my relationship with God?

*Am I trusting in God's sovereignty in my life?

*Am I pouring my heart out to God?

*Am I trusting God, even with my doubts (need God's Word and one another)

*Am I praising Him and giving Him the glory for answered prayer. (with whom am I sharing answered prayer?)