

Week Beginning: 15th December 2019

Worship Series: #3 in series

CHRISTMAS
PLAYLIST

living sharing growing

Theme Verse

"Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has visited and redeemed his people"

Luke 1:68 NLT



Remember This Week

God has visited this world and what he promises is so much beyond human ability that it is almost unbelievable. But don't underestimate what the grace and love of God can do. For when you are willing to enter into and believe God's Word, the promise will become true for you too and fill your lips with a joyful song for eternity.



**You said, "I have made a covenant with
my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,
'I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all generations.'**

Psalms 89:3-4

Your promises stand firm through all generations, O God, great is your faithfulness. Come and let your coming fill us with a song of joy that arises from a heart set free, a mind made clear and a soul renewed because you have visited us and fulfilled all your promises to us. Bless this time together that we may encourage each other to believe and live in trust as we hold to your promises to us, We ask this in your precious name. Amen.



1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *How did you go with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *What's the biggest promise you have ever made? How have you gone in keeping it?*
4. *What's the greatest opportunity of a lifetime that has been presented to you? Did you take it or not? Share..*
5. *If there was one person you could mute in your family, who would it be and why?*

Everybody sings...in the car in the shower, along with ads on TV...wandering around the house doing odd jobs...on the job? Sometimes life has its own tune... maybe it's a song of despair as we looked at last week. But sometimes it is a melody of expectation. A song that sings toward something new - a promise a pledge a commitment just waiting to be fulfilled. Young children know that sort of song when the tree goes up in the lounge room; there's a promise just waiting to be kept. But when the promise is long in coming or seemingly forgotten, it can be hard to believe the promise even if it is right in front of our faces. This week we get to sing with a vocalist named Zechariah, who has been waiting so long he's almost forgotten how to sing, but when the promise is kept and the expectation fulfilled you can hear his song across the centuries. Today you are invited to join in singing and experience the joy that this song of promise brings.

Read Luke 5-25; 57-79

6. *What things stick out most for you in this text?*
7. *What promises are made in this passage and why does Zechariah struggle to believe they are true?*
8. *What does Zechariah's song reveal about who God is and what he has done?*
9. *How comfortable are you with silence when you are alone....with others?*





10. *What is the longest period of time that you felt God was silent in your life? Describe it?*

The Old Testament ends with Malachi 4:5–6, written four centuries before the birth of Christ:

“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

Just like that, the Old Testament comes to a close. But then God goes silent for 400 years. Not a word before the angel appears to a startled Zechariah as he goes about his priestly duties.

11. *How similar or different do you think your reaction would have been to Zechariah's, given the context of this story?*
12. *What do you think the congregation outside in the temple would have been thinking when Zechariah took longer than normal to come out, and then when he did, was not able to pronounce the blessing that God had heard their prayers?*
13. *In what ways does God use Zechariah's time of being mute as a preparation time for the song that he will sing?*
14. *How has God been using this season of Advent to prepare you to sing at Christmas?*

The angel's appearance to Zechariah was not some random event. It was fully orchestrated by God. The word translated as 'come' in verse 68. **“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them,** is better translated as 'visited' his people. This word is significant. It is not simply turning up and paying someone a visit so you can have a cup of tea with them. Rather, it is a word that recognises that the person being visited is in trouble. They are in distress. Someone visits them because they have the solution to that distress or problem and have come to relieve them of this distress. Zechariah is saying, "God has shown up, he is on the move and he is coming to save us, rescue us." God hasn't been silent, he's been planning something big. Zechariah's opportunity to serve in the temple at that time was God planned. Think of the details of this story and the meaning of the name. Zechariah's name means, "Jehovah remembers". "Elizabeth" means "The promises of God." Together they mean, "God remembers His promises!" How's that for coincidence!!! Add that to the meaning of "John" - "God has been gracious." and you have jigsaw pieces that together forms a picture that shows us the heart of God for his people.

15. *In his song, Zechariah names 5 things that the coming Saviour brings for his people. What are they? See verse 68, verse 74, verse 77, verses 77-79, verses 69, 71, 77.*

God's revolutionary goal for his people, in every generation, is that having rescued them, they might 'serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days' (verses 74b-75); that out lifesong may be a constant offering of worship as we serve him as priests in his presence.

16. *To what degree is your life a song of worship and service to God at the current time?*
17. *What holds you back from serving God in this way?*

Martin Luther once wrote: "The life of Christianity consists of personal pronouns." What he means by this is that it is one thing to say that Jesus Christ came. It is entirely another to believe and trust with confidence that Jesus Christ came for me.

18. *What does it mean for you that God has come and visited you personally?*
19. *What promises of God do you most need to believe and trust at this time of your life and how can your LifeGroup help you hold onto those promises so you can sing with joy this Christmas?*

- * Praise God for his faithfulness to his Word. Thank Jesus for 'visiting' you personally and bringing you salvation. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you believe and trust all God's promises especially in the times when you feel that God is silent.
- * Pray for those families devastated by the fires and drought in our country and for those who who lost ones in the volcanic eruption on White Island, NZ.
- * Pray for all those preparing for and leading Christmas services in the next week, that the promises of Immanuel, God with us, may be proclaimed loudly.
- * Pray that your life would be a holy act of worship to the King of Kings who came to save you, and that through you, God would place his song on the lips of others.
- * Pray for the person you are inviting to come to Christmas Services that they may hear good news of great joy for them personally.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

Name, may the joy of Jesus play loudly in your ears this Christmas. Amen.

