

## God's unique workings in our lives

We so often look at others and envy their lives, the way God provides for them, the families they have i.e. their husbands or wives when you can't find one, or their children when you are struggling to have children. Most of the time we see their successes and not their struggles. God works uniquely in each of our lives according to our relationship with him, and His purpose for our lives.

Luke 1: 5 – 25

### 1) Hardship isn't always due to sin

- Zechariah and Elizabeth were very old and were childless – a shame in that culture of the time.
- Their hardship wasn't due to direct sin as they were both righteous in the sight of God.
  - Why I say direct sin is that sin is the root cause of all hardship.
  - Hardship came into life with the sin of Adam and Eve.
  - Genesis 3:16-17 To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.
- From the time of Adam, the righteous have suffered although not from any direct sin of their own.
  - Cain killed Abel
  - David was hunted by Saul to be killed
  - Jesus himself suffered at the hands of the wicked.
  - Psalms 34:19-20 The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.
- Elizabeth was barren, but the Lord saw her and opened her womb, as he did for Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Hannah who gave birth to the patriarchs, and to the prophet Samuel.

### 2) God meets us in the course of life

- Life didn't stop for Zechariah and Elizabeth.
  - Zechariah was a priest and continued working as a priest, in the same way someone else might be an accountant, or a mechanic, etc.
- It was while he was going about doing his duties in the course of life that God met him.
  - In the same way God had met Moses while he was going about his duties as a shepherd when he saw the burning bush where God met him and commissioned him to set the Israelites free.
  - David was going about his duties as a shepherd when Samuel called him to anoint him as the king of Israel.
- When we're going through hardships God doesn't want us to give up on life but to carry on in the course of life.
  - We aren't called to be hermits and run away from life and the duties that God has given us to do when we go through hardships.
  - Yes, God does meet us on prayer, but he also expects us to live life according to the duties that he's assigned us.
  - It is often while going about our normal duties of life that He meets us at our point of need

### 3) Hope in impossible situations

- Zechariah and Elizabeth were in an impossible situation.
  - They were both very old and beyond the age of having children.
  - There wasn't anything humanly possible for them to change their situation.
  - It seems that they had even given up all hope of doing so, even though they prayed to the Lord, like Hannah who went into the temple and cried out to the Lord for a child.
- God sees your impossible situation, your hardship, your pain, your turmoil, and wants us to call out to him.
  - Psalms 18:6 In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.
  - Even though we might have resigned ourselves to our situations never changing, God delights in us calling out to him.
  - Calling out to him in our distresses demonstrates faith that he can change what we can't change.
- In the case of Zechariah, he prayed to the Lord and the Lord heard his prayer.
  - 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 call him John.
  - When God unexpectedly meets you at your point of need, we ought to ask ourselves what he is doing in our lives.
- Although Zechariah had been praying for a baby, he didn't believe the angel when he told him that Elizabeth would give birth to a boy and name him John.
  - How often we pray for a need, but then don't believe God when he answers our prayers!
  - This was unlike Mary and Joseph who believed the angel when they were told of the birth of Jesus.

### 4) Honour restored

- Besides God's purposes unfolding in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth, her shame was taken away and her honour restored by her having a baby.
  - Luke 1:24-25 After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. "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."
  - Regardless of what people may think about us before or after God meets us at our point of need, he restores our honour and what He thinks about us is all that matters.
- Whatever your situation, seek God and see what he'll do in your life.
- Don't look for sin where there isn't sin. Not all hardships are due to sin.
- Live the life that God wants you to live regardless of your hardships. He'll meet you where you are.
- Don't stop calling out to God. He'll give hope in your seemingly impossible situations.
- He will restore your honour in life. He might not do it the same way that he did it for others, but he'll do it.
- Zechariah and Elizabeth weren't expecting to become the parents of the forerunner of the Messiah
- Joseph and Mary weren't expecting to become the parents of the Messiah himself.
- Hannah wasn't expecting to become the mother of the prophet of Israel.
- God can work unexpected things in your lives regardless of your present circumstances.