



One Page Sermon

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Second Sunday of Advent: Prayer for Peace (Luke 1:65-79)

Zechariah's song is a release of joy and celebration after the birth of John, who would grow up to be known as John the Baptist. The birth of John was surrounded by intrigue and excitement. Elizabeth's pregnancy itself was an astonishing thing given her age. Plus, there must have been rumors about what was troubling Zachariah—who had not been able to speak since doubting the angel Gabriel who told him that his wife would bear a son.

It is said that the whole community celebrated the birth of this miraculous child, and they asked, "What then will this child be?"

Holding a newborn baby is a poignant thing. It is true joy to look into the face of a tiny infant, count the fingers, marvel at the pores on the nose, touch the velvet-soft cheek, and steal quick peeks at the eyes slowly opening and quickly closing again. Holding a child is a moment of awe and wonder, and one cannot help but marvel in the miracle of the moment and look forward to the wonder of what is to come. The whole community asked this question, and Zachariah was able to look at his son and see something no one else could see.

For a moment, consider the emotions that were gripping Zachariah in this moment. Given deep understanding by the Holy Spirit, Zachariah not only sees the glory of God, but also the great future that lies in front of his son. Zachariah declares that John will be a prophet of the Most High.

Zachariah looked at his newborn son and saw a great future. But he also must have seen great trials. To say that John would be a prophet also meant that John would suffer. It meant he would be frustrated. It meant that he would live a life of seeing the world for what it should be, while feeling the wounds of a world that was not it. John would point to the coming Messiah. John would tell the people how they could be saved. John would tell the people about the power of changing their hearts and minds, but changing hearts and minds is no simple task.

Zachariah must have had great hope in this moment, but it must have been a moment of bittersweet reflection. Zechariah praised God when his son was born. He praised God for the promises that God made. He praised God for the promises that God kept. He praised God for the promise that was in his son. For he knew that his son was created for a purpose. He knew that his son would be called a prophet. He knew that his



son would "go before the Lord to prepare a way." He knew that his son would "tell the people how to be saved through the forgiveness of their sins." Zechariah was filled with joy at the birth of his son, so he praised God.

But I'm here to tell you that God rejoices no less for you than did Zechariah for his son. Zechariah so loved his son that he could glimpse him through God's eternal eyes. God so loves you that he has laid out a path for you to follow. God has given you something that makes you uniquely you. There is something in you that transcends employment, labels, gender, race, or status. God has created you with a purpose, and is calling you to that purpose today. You were created to do no less than John once did – to prepare the way of the Lord, and "to show the people the way to salvation through the forgiveness of sins."

Zachariah saw a great purpose in his son's life. People wondered, "What then will this child be?" John grew to be the voice in the wilderness that cried out, "Prepare the way of the Lord."

What then will you be? For what purpose have you been created? Use what you have been given to do as John did. Prepare the way of the Lord. Show people the way of salvation. Find those that sit in the shadow of death, and sit next to them. Hold their hand. Weep with them. Give them love. Show them the light, and declare that the dawn is coming. Declare that the dawn is coming, and let the Holy Spirit guide us on the path of peace.