

# advent week one

day six, friday, december 3rd

"And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

Luke 1:18-25

When we compare the situation of Zechariah to Abraham's, we can hardly miss the parallels.

- God promises both a son
- Both their wives are unable to have children
- Both men are well advanced in age
- Both men respond the same to God's promise: Abraham: "How shall I know?" (Gen. 15:8), Zechariah: "How shall I know?" (Luke 1:18).

God's response to each is radically different. In response to Abraham, God provides a covenant ceremony. Zechariah ends up mute and deaf. Perhaps Zechariah had begun losing hope in God's desire to answer prayer. Maybe in the busyness of his work he stopped spending time in communion with God, the one who powerfully intervenes and changes circumstances that seem beyond hope, just as for Abraham. If God had done it before, God could certainly do it again.

Perhaps the gift of silence was God's grace to Zechariah as an invitation to be still and know (Ps. 46:10). Maybe God gifted Zechariah with not just a baby, but with the sacred space of stopping and considering the wonder of a God who's desire is to meet our deepest desires.

You may find yourself in a season of hopelessness and constant busyness. Richard Foster comments that, "our adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry, and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in -->

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'muchness' and 'manyness,' he will rest satisfied."

Perhaps this season God is extending to you the same invitation as the grace given to Zechariah, to slow down and know God.

**REFLECT:** In what ways can you intentionally slow down and spend time with the one who can meet you and powerfully intervene in whatever you are facing, just like with Abraham and Zechariah?

**PRAY:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forgive us for getting so caught up in the busyness of life that we fail to make spending time with you a priority. Grant us the grace to trust you enough to intentionally carve out space for prayer and silence with you, that we might be surprised with wonder in discerning your presence in the midst of life's demands this season. Amen.