

Luke 1: 57-80; “The Dayspring From on High”, Sermon # 5 in the series – “The Prophecies of Christ’s Birth”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 11th, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.

The ministry of John the Baptist and the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ are integrally linked together here in the prophetic words of Zacharias concerning them both. John in his ministry would give forth the knowledge that there was salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. He would point out to all the people of Israel that Christ was the dawn of a new day for them if they would receive His light of truth, and believe in Him for salvation.

To those of us who live in this day and at this time, it is still true; that if you are only able to see this starlight, this Dayspring of the glory of our Lord Jesus, still the spiritual light has dawned upon you. And as you continue to behold the glory of His light and life, and you continue to believe in Him, your beholding it will result in your everlasting salvation. For as it says in Proverbs chapter 4, verse 18 – “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

When Christ is seen by you as the Daystar, by faith, it means that the greater light of the full day is coming to you. It means that there is so much more that is great that is coming. And He will come to your soul to prove this to you. Zacharias gives his personal testimony to these things. 3 things that he would tell you of by his prophetic words in this passage.

1st of all – Zacharias tells us of how the Lord took away the reproach of his unbelief and gave him the ability to speak once again. (verses 57-66)

Now, this may not be something that you have thought much about; that is, your unbelief being a reproach in the sight of God. But if you will remember how Zacharias got himself into this situation of being unable to speak for the whole time of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, perhaps it will help. Back in verse 17 of Luke 1, we hear the angel Gabriel telling Zacharias this: He (that is John the Baptist who would go before Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah) would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, so that he would make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And you will recall how Zacharias responded to this wonderful news. He did not believe it! He said to Gabriel – How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years. In other words, he was very skeptical that God could bring this thing to pass. For he and Elizabeth were such old people! Well, immediately, Gabriel reproached him with his unbelief. He said to him in verse 19 – I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time. This indeed was a reproach rightly given to Zacharias.

This righteous reproach was spoken to Zacharias in order to show him his unbelief, and the shame of the words which he spoke to Gabriel, the one who was standing in the very presence of God. And it is good for us to remember Zacharias was, in every other respect, righteous before God walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless! But here, he was not blameless. It is apparent that it is possible for a believer, even a Christian, to be outwardly walking with the Lord, and in every way keeping His commandments outwardly, and yet to fall into a sinful skepticism regarding what God can do, or what He purposes to do. This is a great offense to God!

The proof that this was a great offense to God, was the disciplinary action that was taken by the Angel Gabriel, telling him that he would be mute and be unable to speak; and that he would

be this way until the day that John was born! Gabriel had given him the best possible news that he could receive, of what God was going to do for he and Elizabeth, and yet Zacharias refused to receive it as God had intended it to be for him, as something that would bring him great joy. Therefore he would lose his ability to speak until the day John was born! Now, I hope that each of us can see, just what an affront to God it is; our unbelief, if we are a Christian.

I am sure that many of us here believe that it is an affront to God when any person does not believe in the gospel of His Son. I am pretty sure that you can see this. For it says in John 3: 18 – “He who believes in Christ is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Yes, I think that we can understand this, can’t we, based upon the natural depravity of man; that people will love their sins, more than they will God? That they will love the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds are evil?

This, from the way the verse is written there, does not excuse any person if they do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. But it does give us an explanation. Everyone who is evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds be exposed it says there in John 3: 20. But it is a reproach to any Christian if they do not believe the words of promise which are given to them in the Scriptures, both Old Testament and New, and they allow themselves to fall into unbelief.

Letting yourself fall into unbelief, for whatever reason, should not be allowed by you as a Christian. For when you came to Christ, the bent of your unbelieving mind and heart against God and the truth of His word has been taken away in regeneration. When the Spirit of God comes and causes you to be born again you receive eyes to see and ears to hear the truth. Your will is renewed to receive the truth of all the promises of God. The hardness of your heart is taken away in the spiritual circumcision of your fleshly nature. You are given the grace of faith by the Holy Spirit presence and power working in your heart. Why? It is so that you would continually be believing, and not unbelieving.

It is so that you will make progress in righteousness and holiness in every way, by faith. And yet, sometimes, our flesh gets the better of us, and we fall into the sin of unbelief. Is unbelief in the Christian a violation of any direct commandment of God? Yes, beloved, it is. Psalm 62, verses 7 and 8 – “In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.” “Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.” Do you see how faith will always lead you to pour out your heart in prayer before God, and to see Him as your strength?

What happens then, when the Christian falls into unbelief? Well, the Lord sees exactly what the problem is with you in particular. And, if we can use Zacharias as an example, we know that He will address your problem by His providentially ordering circumstances in your life that will teach you in a loving way, what you need to learn about exercising faith. God still loves you, dear Christian, even when you have fallen into unbelief. Yes, He will cause you to see and to understand your sinful unbelief. But He will go on to rescue you from yourself and build your faith so that you will do better in terms of your believing His promises.

He did this with Zacharias, and He will do it for you where you need it, as well. Zacharias’ problem was that he thought that old age was an insurmountable obstacle to being able to have a child. He learned that nothing was impossible with God. Will you not see, dear Christian, that nothing is too difficult for God? Bearing children or bearing fruit unto God in old age, neither of these is too hard for God. It is for you to believe in His promises!

2nd – Zacharias tells us how we might serve God without fear. (verses 67-75)

“Now Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began.” I think that it is good when we understand that we can serve God without fear when we realize that salvation is not of ourselves, but it comes when He visits us and redeems us to be His people. Christ’s coming into the world in His Incarnation is spoken of here as visiting us, and His having redeemed a people for Himself by this means of Who He is and what He did when He visited us.

It is God who has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David. This is our Lord Jesus Christ, who was descended of David. He was and He is the horn of our salvation. The word “horn” is a metaphor which is taken from beasts whose strength, and defense, and victory over other animals lies chiefly in their horns. In some of those animals, their horns also are very beautiful to the way that they look; majestic and imposing. And so in the Scripture, the word horn is used emblematically to denote strength or power. Such as in Psalm 75: 10 – “All the horns of the wicked I will also cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.”

The Lord Jesus Christ was strong and powerful in His ability to deal with our sins by the strength of His righteousness and His willingness and ability to suffer in our place on the cross for our sins. God the Father says of Him in Psalm 89: 24 that, “His faithfulness and His mercy shall be with him, and in His name His horn would be exalted.” Christ was the power of God and the wisdom of God. And God the Father was pleased in every way with the obedience of our Lord Jesus to His holy law. And so He was pleased to raise Him from the dead and to crown Him with glory and honor.

Christ’s death on the cross was prophesied of, way back when the world began in Genesis 3: 15 – “And I will put enmity between you Satan and the woman, and between your seed Satan, and her Seed.” The woman was the virgin Mary, and her Seed was our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan would bruise His heel at the cross. But Christ would crush Satan’s head. He would gore him fatally in regard to all his sinister and sinful purposes to prevent the redemption of God’s elect people. With the horn of His power, He would save us from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. This does not mean that we would be saved from all persecution. But rather, it means that He would protect us in the sense that He would keep our souls safe through all of these persecutions and oppressions of spirit, that will come to us as His people.

It means that because of Christ’s Person and His purchase of grace, that we would always know the reality of all of God’s blessings of salvation covering us, and being bestowed upon us. He will always keep us eternally safe and in His loving care. In the inspired heading of Psalm 18, and in verses 1-3 it says this – “To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David The Servant of the LORD, Who spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day that the LORD delivered Him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.” “And he said: I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” “I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies.”

This is how we might serve God without fear. We remember that God is faithful to remember His covenant with Christ our Savior. God because of Christ’s becoming the sacrificial lamb, the lamb slain for sinners, God will perform the mercy promised to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham, the father of our faith, as well as the Jews. This is referring to the oath that God made to Abraham when he obeyed

God and went to Mt. Moriah and would have offered his own son Isaac there as a burnt offering on the mountain in Genesis chapter 22. God tested Abraham by commanding him to take his only son Isaac and go and offer him as a burnt offering on Mt. Moriah. Abraham obediently went. He took the wood and laid in place as an altar. He took the knife and stretched out his hand to slay his son.

But the Angel of the Lord called to him and said – Wait, Abraham! Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me.” The Angel of the Lord saying these things to him was the Pre-Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. He would be the One who, in time, would become flesh. He would become the sacrifice for the sins of the world. Let us remember this at this Christmas season. Christ was the greatest gift ever given to any person. Therefore receive Him, and in doing so, the Lord will provide atonement for all of your sins, and the grace and strength to live a godly and righteous life in His sight.

If you know and believe that Christ has lived sinlessly before God on your behalf; if you know that He has died a sacrifice on the cross for your sins, then you love Him because you see Him as your strength. You love Him because He is your Rock, your Fortress, and your Deliverer. Therefore, He is the One whom you can trust in every difficult and dangerous situation. In every situation He will be your shield and the horn of your salvation. And you will call upon Him who is worthy to be praised. If you see Him in this holy way, by faith, He will save you from all your enemies. And you will be able to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all of your days.

3rd – Zacharias tells us how Christ the Dayspring has visited us and what He gives.

In verses 76 and 77 it says that John the Baptist would go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins. John would preach Christ and the remission of sins in having faith in Him, the One who was coming to Israel. Christ, the Dayspring from on high visited them in His Incarnation and in His earthly ministry. The Dayspring is the dawn, the beginning of the day. And Christ's first coming was that very thing, the dawning of a New Day of grace and the offer of salvation to all mankind. The dawning of the day of grace comes to individual people when they come to see the Lord Jesus as the Light of the World, the Sun of righteousness who comes with healing in His wings.

What does Jesus come to give when He shines His light? It is the good news that you do not have to sit in the darkness of sin and ignorance and the shadow of death any longer. You can have the light of life. If you believe in Him, He will personally remit the debt of sin which you owe to God. He has paid the penalty, He has borne the guilt, the shame, and the punishment for all of your sins at the cross. In believing in Him you will find remission of sins; all of your sins washed away in His blood, and His righteousness imputed to your legal account in the sight of God.

It is then that God justifies you for Jesus sake, and He sees you and looks at you now, as covered with Christ's righteousness. He sees you perfect and complete in Him. You now begin to experience on a continual basis the tender mercy of our God; the realization of all of the wealth of blessings that come to for Jesus sake. It is a Dayspring of blessings, a cornucopia of blessings. And the wonderful thing that takes place in your life following conversion to Christ, is that God will guide your feet into the way of peace. Christ made peace between you and God by the blood of His cross. And then in giving us His word and His Spirit, He leads us into the true way of enjoying spiritual peace now, and eternal peace when He calls us home to be with Him forever. Let us rejoice at the greatness of these blessings and resolve to pursue peace with all men and the holiness which will come to us when we walk in the light of all that Christ has lived and died to purchase for us.

