



God,

Our Sure Hope

CCF CHRONICLE

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LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE

Biblical hope is the firm certainty and assurance anchored in God's promises and character. Christmas is a very clear reminder to us of this sure hope that we have in God. In Luke 1:1-25, 57-66, we find key insights into God's loving faithfulness and trustworthiness through the life of Zacharias, Elizabeth, and John.

Zacharias, a priest married to Elizabeth, faced childlessness due to their old age and Elizabeth's barrenness. This couple's significance in the Christmas story reflects God's promise, intricately woven and reflected in the meaning of their names: Zacharias means "God remembers," Elizabeth signifies "God keeps His promises," and John embodies "God is gracious".

God Remembers

Christmas was prophesied as early as Genesis (Genesis 3:15, 22:18), 2 Samuel 7:13, and Isaiah 7:14, 9:6. Even after the Jewish people were conquered and exiled, God remembered His promise of the Messiah. God is our sure hope because He remembers His promises. In God, we find assurance and steadfast foundation for hope — rooted in the confidence of eternal life, the joyful expectation of Jesus' return, and the promise of a reward for faithful living (Titus 1:2, 2:13; 2 Timothy 4:8).

We may not be happy with our circumstances, but we can look forward to the future with hope (Jeremiah 29:11). We don't have to be in despair — instead, we can put our hope in God (Psalm 42:5-11, Lamentations 3:21-24). We can claim God's promise in Romans 8:28 that God works everything together for our good, no matter what's happening in our lives. His purpose is that we will be like His Son in our character. This promise is conditional: for those who love God!

God Keeps His Promises

What significance do Zacharias and Elizabeth hold in connection to God's promise of a Messiah? In Malachi 3:1, there was a prophecy about God's "messenger". People will know who the Messiah is because of this "messenger."

While Zacharias was fulfilling his priestly duties, an angel appeared to him. The angel Gabriel then assured Zechariah that his prayers had been heard, proclaiming that Elizabeth would bear a son named "John". Zacharias, having fervently prayed for a child for an extended period, may have reached a point of despair, potentially even relinquishing hope that his prayers would be answered. Here, we witness the faithfulness of God, who, as Hebrews 6:17-18 assures us, does not lie, and steadfastly keeps His oath. The fulfillment of the promise to Zacharias and Elizabeth serves as a testament to the unwavering reliability of God's character and word.

God is Gracious

God's grace is prominently evident in the narrative of Zacharias and Elizabeth. John was prophesied to bring joy to many, and even before his birth, he was destined to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The manifestation of God's grace occurs through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. God had already revealed John's role in His divine plan. When Zacharias questioned the feasibility of God's promise due to its human impossibility, the response highlighted a crucial truth: with God, all things are possible, and His promises are unfailingly fulfilled. Despite Zacharias' doubts, God, in His graciousness, kept His promise. Even God's corrective intervention served as a manifestation of grace.

John's life was profoundly influenced by the grace of God, and his parents played a pivotal role. Zacharias imparted God's vision for John's life. John directed people to Jesus, emphasizing that God's grace fosters humility, and humility, in turn, invites more grace (John 1:19-23, 36-37). The familial connection between John and Jesus was no accident; God orchestrated their intertwined lives to fulfill prophecy.

Let Romans 15:13 be our prayer today, that we will abound in hope that is anchored in Christ, that we may be filled with joy, peace, and rest as we put our trust in Him (Psalm 62:5). God is our sure hope!

last week's memory verse

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 15:13

discuss the message

- Why is hope important?
- What is secular hope vs biblical hope?
- How do we develop biblical hope?
- How should biblical hope impact our life now?

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NXTGEN KIDS FROM 4-12 YEARS OLD

Merry and Bright: Let the Joy of Christmas Light the New Year

Sundays, 9:00 AM, 12:00 NN, 3:00 PM
G/F North Wing

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LOOKING FOR ANSWERS? THINK YOUR VISIT IS A COINCIDENCE? YOUR BEING HERE TODAY IS NO ACCIDENT!

God brought you here for His purpose.

1 God loves you.

He desires for you to have a meaningful life with Him in the present and gain eternal life with Him in the future.

*Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who **keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness** to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments – Deuteronomy 7:9*

2 God is holy.

We are sinful, and our sin separates us from Him.

Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. – Romans 3:23

3 God is merciful.

In His love, He made the only way for us to be reconciled to Him: through His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins and be raised to life for eternity.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. – Romans 5:8

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. – John 14:6

4 God is gracious.

By placing our faith in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven of our sins and saved from eternal death.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. – John 3:16

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. – Ephesians 2:8-9

5 God keeps His promises.

You can be sure that you have eternal life when you trust in Jesus.

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. – 1 John 5:11-13

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5:00 PM

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