

Dec 3 – Small Group Questions - Luke 1:1-25

In the Greco Roman world heralds took news of objective history changing events from town to town. It may have been news of victory in battle, the ascension of a new king, or the ratification of a peace treaty. In Greek this news was called euangelion or gospel. The herald was called an evangelist. The early Jesus followers adopted this language to say that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus was an objective history changing event that impacted everything. This language was subversive in a world saturated with the gospel of Caesar. This was the news of a counter king, a counter kingdom, and a counter kingdom lifestyle.

1. How does this context shape our understanding of Luke as gospel?

Read Luke 1:1-25

2. There had been no prophet of God in Israel for over 400 years. God had been silent for 400 years. Have you ever encountered the silence of God? How did you respond? How did it make you feel? How did it impact your view of God? Your view of your value in His eyes?
3. As Luke tells us about the personal tragedy of Zachariah and Elizabeth he goes to great length to undermine a linkage between their goodness or lack of goodness and their circumstances. Why does such a linkage need to be broken?
4. Silence does not mean that God has not heard our prayer. When the angel comes he says your prayers "have been heard" (past tense). Zachariah would not have been praying his own personal desires as he stood before the altar of incense. How can the truth that silence does not mean that God has not heard our prayers impact how we deal with the silence of God?
5. Holding the story of Zechariah alongside the story of Mary reveals that both of them respond initially with doubt. In response the angel brings Zechariah to silence and sends Mary to Elizabeth. It is often seen that God is punishing Zechariah for unbelief and affirming Mary's belief. But what if each response is a gift – that conversation is exactly what Mary needs – and silence exactly what Zachariah means for the good news to take hold in each of their hearts?
6. The gospel is the objective history changing event of Jesus' life death and resurrection. It is, what Luke says, what has been accomplished among us. As such the gospel doesn't invite us to do, it tells us it has been done. How does silence and conversation help us build our foundation on the gospel, the finished work of Jesus?
7. What are some of the ways you have become rooted in the good news of Jesus?