

Lk 1:5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

1:6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

1:7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

1:8 So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division,

1:9 according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

1:10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

1:11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

1:12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

1:13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

1:14 "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

1:15 "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

1:16 "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

1:17 "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

1:18 And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

1:19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

1:20 "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."

1:21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple.

1:22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

1:23 And so it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.

1:24 Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months,

saying,

1:25 "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

From today's sermon.

Why is it that I keep praying and asking God, but He doesn't respond? Is God unfaithful?

Have you ever wondered these questions?

Both Zacharias, a priest, and his wife Elizabeth, born of the family of Aaron the priest, "were both righteous before God, and had done all His commandments and ordinances without fault. Even so, their long prayers were not heard. This was a great concern to them.

Then one day, suddenly, their prayers were heard. Suddenly, their prayers were heard.

Then an angel of the Lord appeared and stood at the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw this, he was perplexed and terrified."

God had answered his prayer and was about to do His work, but he was perplexed, afraid, trembling, his heart was stirred, and fear fell upon him. Why was this? Why was it that his prayers were answered and the good news came to him, but he could not accept it?

But he laments that the time is too late. But God, through His angel, tells him, "When the time comes, it will be done. But God tells him through His angel, "When the time is right, it will be done. God's time has come and things will be done. God will bring things to fruition at God's best time.

The time to celebrate the Lord's Nativity is coming again this year. We are about to welcome that time as we count down our fingers to the Nativity of our Lord.

Luke 1. Here, too, there were people who had been waiting for a long time.

Zacharias and Elisabeth.

1:5 In the days of Herod, king of the Jews, there was a man named Zacharias, a priest of the house of Abijah. And his wife was one of the daughters of the house of Aaron, whose name was Elisabeth.

1:6 Both of them were righteous before God, and they did all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord without fault.

1:7 But they were barren, because Elisabeth was a barren woman; and they were both old.

Why and why are our long-suffering prayers not being heard when we have done so much

right before God without fault? This was their concern. It was already too late. It seemed as if it had been determined that our prayers had not been answered, that my wife had already reached old age, and that our prayers had automatically been abandoned.

But God answers prayers in His own best time.

1:8 Now Zacharias, when his household was on duty and doing the work of priests before God

1:9 And he drew lots according to the custom of the priestly office, and it came to pass that he was to go into the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense.

1:10 While the incense was being burned, many of the people were outside praying.

1:11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared and stood at the right side of the altar of incense.

1:12 And when Zacharias saw this, he was perplexed and terrified.

The angel of the Lord appeared. And the word of God is spoken. God's work finally begins. This is a joyous occasion. But when Zacharias saw this, he was perplexed, his heart was anxious, he was terrified, he trembled, his heart was stirred, and fear fell upon him. What a thing to behold! God intervened. What should have been a joyous deliverance, an answer to prayer, was for Zacharias a terrible and unwelcome event. Is there such a thing in our lives? There are verses in which we think that we must be fulfilled in our own timing and as we wish. But when that does not happen, we think that our prayers have been dismissed by the love of the world. And as for God's timing and fulfillment being different from our expectations, we cannot welcome that. But God is beyond human knowledge. He is the One who completes His wonderful works in us in ways that are beyond human knowledge.

1:13 Then the angel said to him, "Fear not, O Zacharias; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elisabeth will give birth to a son. And he shall call his name John.

1:14 He will bring you joy and gladness, and many people will rejoice at his birth.

1:15 And he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb of his mother,

1:16 And he will cause many of the children of Israel to return to the Lord their God.

1:17 He will go before you in the spirit and power of Elijah, and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will bring the thoughts of the righteous to those who oppose them, and he will prepare a prepared people for the Lord.

There is no need to fear, no need to be troubled, no need to be stirred up, because your

prayers have been heard. Do not be afraid, do not be troubled, do not be disturbed, do not be terrified. God's work will be revealed to you.

When I think about it, I realize that prayer is an amazing thing. It may be that we are offering our desires to God's realm. We offer our desires to God, which means to ask God for help, but we also offer all of our desires to God's domain, or we entrust our entire existence to God and wait for God's hand to guide us, or we wait for God to guide us if our desires are wrong or not enough, or if our desires are not good enough. We learn from this event that it is like submitting to God our answers to a test, which may be wrong or inadequate, and God corrects them and returns them to us in a perfect state.

Sometimes God's corrections are far from our original wishes. When that happens, we are puzzled. We pray for immediate fulfillment, only to be told decades later that it will be done, and we are puzzled as to why it is too late. We are puzzled as to why we are told that it is already late, but for God, the time is not late at all, but the time is the best time.

Prayer, we realize, is a tremendous thing. But prayer is a wonderful thing. Sometimes we don't know how to pray, but God does what He does best.

1:18 Then Zacharias said to the angel, "How can I know such things? I am an old man, and my wife is old.

This may have been his small resistance. Perhaps it was his anger, "Why now? How could he possibly understand such a thing now? I feel as if I can see through his sadness, disappointment, and anger.

How could I possibly understand such a thing?

We often say things like, "I don't know," "I don't understand," and so on. But how small is our understanding of the truth of the whole world? So much remains unknown, even in the 21st century. How little do we humans know or understand? If so, how much does it matter if we can understand or not?

1:19 The angel answered and said, "I am Gabriel standing before God, and I have been sent to tell you this glad tidings.

1:20 Because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in due season, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not speak until the day that this thing shall come to pass.

He was always an angel standing before God. Always illuminated by God's glory, which shines remarkably early and brightly, and surrounded by God's glory and fragrance, he served God's love and grace-filled work in every direction. Such glory and power of God are experienced daily by the angels to the marrow. And yet, no matter how good his blood,

righteousness, and flawless his deeds may be, this human-like person was missing something vital. He had no idea of God's greatness, power, unmeasured love, and strength.

How could he not know the joyous news? Why is it so hard to accept the glad tidings?

This is an event that is also connected to 1 John 1:9.

1:9 For there was a light of truth to lighten every man, and he came into the world.

1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him. And the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

1:12 But to those who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave power to become the sons of God.

This glad tidings is, when you get right down to it, the gospel of God. God sent Jesus to take the life of His Son on the accursed cross and condemn all men for their sins. But man cannot receive this glad tidings. Why is this? Why is it so? Why is it that people put this glad tidings on the chopping block, dissecting it to see if it is right or false, and eventually walk away from it? Is human intelligence really needed there?

The word of God will come true when the time is right. It will come to pass when the time is right. God has prepared the time for us. God has the best time for us.

If we believe in such a God and walk daily, our happiness and salvation will be there. All we have to do is to be quiet, smiling and believing that good things will come to pass, even though we have various righteousnesses and names before the Lord.

1:21 The people were waiting for Zacharias, and they wondered at his leisure within the sanctuary.

1:22 Finally he came out, but because he could not speak, the people realized that he had seen a haunting in the sanctuary. He only signaled to them and remained dumb for the rest of the day.

1:23 Then, when the day of his duty was over, he returned home.

1:24 Then Elisabeth, his wife, withdrew, and was shut up for five months,

1:25 And she said, "The Lord has now taken me to his heart, that he may remove my shame from among men.

God removes from us shame, sin, curses, death, sorrow, cries, and doubts. Let us praise the Lord.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. Thank you so much that God listens

to our prayers, gives us glad tidings, and lets us know that in His best time, when that time comes, He will fulfill His good will. Please guide all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and our community. Use us. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.