

December 14, 2025 Luke 1:57-80

Sermon Title: "Guiding Our Feet onto the Path of Peace"

【From Today's Sermon】

Advent is now in its third week. Next week, at last, is our Christmas worship service.

Zacharias, clinging stubbornly to his own wisdom and ideas, was unable to accept God's precious plan. He faced God's judgment before the crowd and became unable to speak.

This is what it means to be "utterly speechless." Seeing his wife Elizabeth's belly grow larger and larger, he could literally say nothing, only watching as the very thing he had arbitrarily decided could never happen—her conception—came to pass.

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that will stand" (Proverbs 19:21).

When he obeyed the Lord's will and named his son John, healing came upon him. He praised God, saying:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked upon his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, to save us from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to perform for us mighty acts of salvation, and to grant us an everlasting inheritance in the presence of his people, to make us a holy and righteous people, fearing him all our days." "This is according to the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

"Look upon me and guide me in the way everlasting." We give thanks for the path of restoration through the Lord's mercy.

Prologue: Restoration and Calling through the Lord's Healing "Zachariah was given a writing tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' Everyone was amazed. Immediately his mouth opened and his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak, praising God."

"Look upon me and see if there is any wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

"Look to see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." (New Common Translation)

"Look to see if there is any way of wounding in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." (New Revised Translation)

→ "71 To deliver us from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. 72 Thus God has shown mercy to our ancestors and remembered his holy covenant, 73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham. 74 He has rescued us from the hand of our enemies, 75 enabling us to serve

him without fear, with holiness and righteousness before him all our days."

Psalm 139:1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me.

139:2 You know when I sit and when I rise; You discern my thoughts from afar.

139:3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

139:4 Before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely, O Lord.

139:5 You hem me in, behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.

139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain it.

139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

139:8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

139:9 If I take the wings of the dawn, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

139:10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

139:11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light around me become night,"

139:12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to you.

139:13 For you formed my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

139:14 I will praise you, for you are awesome and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and I know that full well.

139:15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

139:16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. Before a single day of my life was formed, all my days were written in your book.

139:17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

139:18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

139:19 O God, kill the wicked; drive away from me the man who sheds blood.

139:20 They take up a taunting attitude against you; they resist you and are arrogant.

139:21 And I, Lord, hate those who hate you; I despise those who rise up against you.

139:22 I hate them utterly; I count them as my enemies.

139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.

139:24 See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Proverbs 19:20 Listen to counsel and accept instruction, and you will become wise.

19:21 Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that will stand.

19:22 What is desirable is to be gracious; the poor is better than one who lies.

19:23 The fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.

The Advent candles are finally down to the third one. Next week is finally the Christmas service.

During this Advent season of waiting for the Lord, we have once again learned from the Scriptures the wonder of trusting without fear and entrusting everything to the Lord's word.

1:28 The angel came to Mary and said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

1:30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."

1:31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus.

1:34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

1:35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be holy and will be called the Son of God.

1:36 Even your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son in her old age, though she was called barren; she is now in her sixth month.

1:37 For nothing is impossible with God."

1:45 Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

1:46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord,

1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

1:48 He has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day forward, all generations will call me blessed,

1:49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me. Holy is his name,

1:50 and his mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

1:51 He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

1:52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

1:53 He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

1:54 The Lord has not forgotten His mercy; He has helped His servant Israel,

1:55 as He promised to Abraham our father and his descendants forever.

How blessed is the person called to a life where God is with them. How blessed is the person whom God guides with His mighty arm.

Yet we often struggle to fully embrace God's realm. Our understanding falls short, our own thoughts stubbornly shut out God's heart, and our hardened self-will resists change. But God's guidance is never mistaken. Though our paths sometimes stray, fall into evil, and become wounded, God's plan stands firm.

Psalm 139:24

"Look to see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

"Look to see if there is any way of perversity in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." (New Common Translation)

"Look to see if there is any way of perversity in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." (New Revised Translation)

Proverbs 19:20 Listen to counsel and accept instruction, and you will become wise.

19:21 Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that will stand.

We often stray from the path, but the Lord provides a way of restoration. We give thanks for God's mercy, full of forgiveness and compassion, and for His guiding hand in restoration.

1:57 Now Elizabeth's time came to give birth, and she bore a son.

1:58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they rejoiced with her.

1:59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they wanted to name him after his father, Zechariah.

1:60 But his mother said, "No! He must be called John."

1:61 They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

1:62 Then they made signs to his father, asking what name he wanted the child to have.

Now the time came for Zechariah. Would he finally be able to make a decision according to God's guidance?

1:63 He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." They were all amazed.

1:64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak,

praising God.

1:65 All their neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea these things were talked about.

1:66 Everyone who heard about it pondered what kind of man this child might become, for the Lord's hand was with him.

Zacharias, appointed as a priest by the Lord, yet unable to live according to the Lord's will. He committed a great failure. As a priest meant to mediate between God and man, he was shown how far his heart had strayed from God. A painful period of silence followed for him. But when he sought to obey God's will, the time of healing, restoration, and liberation came upon him.

Immediately after he declared he would name the child John. his mouth was opened, healed, and restored, and he could speak. For the priest who could no longer utter a single word to mediate between God and man, for the one who could no longer perform any of his duties, the time of restoration had come.

Our Advent, our Christmas message, is the arrival of surpassing joy, the manifestation of God's mercy.

1:67 Filled with the Holy Spirit, Zechariah the priest prophesied,

1:68 "Praise be to the Lord God of Israel, for he has come to his people and redeemed them.

1:69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,

1:70 As spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

1:71 to save us from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

1:72 Thus God has shown mercy to our fathers and remembered His holy covenant,

1:73 the oath He swore to our father Abraham,

1:74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,

1:75 enabling us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

Redemption and salvation. The horn of salvation. This is a strong salvation. A firm, powerful salvation. It is the manifestation of the Lord's mighty power, triumphant and victorious.

"To rescue us from the hand of our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us."

The devil skillfully works upon us, leading us astray, causing us to fall behind, to wander, and to believe we can never return. But that is not so.

1:72 Thus God showed mercy to our ancestors and remembered His holy covenant,

1:73 the oath He swore to our forefather Abraham.

1:74 He rescued us from the hands of our enemies,

1:75 enabling us to serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all our days.

The Lord is a God of mercy. The Lord is our Redeemer. Through the great sacrifice of His Son, He accomplished our redemption, rescued us from the clutches of the evil one who wages war against us, and by His mercy and redemption, heals us moment by moment throughout our long lives. Thus, even in the enemy's grasp, we can worship and serve God with purity and righteousness, without fear.

1 John 3:16 By this we know what love is: Jesus gave his life for us. And we ought to give our lives for our brothers and sisters.

3:17 If anyone has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need but closes their heart against them, how does God's love abide in them?

3:18 Little children, Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.

3:19 By this we know that we are of the truth and may reassure our hearts before him.

3:20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

3:21 Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God.

3:22 And whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

3:23 And this is his commandment: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

3:24 Whoever keeps his commandments remains in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he remains in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

1:76 And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High. For you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

1:77 to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.

1:78 This is because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the dawn from on high will break upon us,

1:79 to shine on those living in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Here is the way. Here is salvation through the forgiveness of sins. It is never too late. How can we still "dwell in the shadow of death and darkness"? Some live in the darkness of sin and evil as their dwelling place. Some mix good and evil together. But we are not like that. We are being led to the eternal way.

2 Corinthians

6:1 We urge you, as God's fellow workers, not to receive God's grace in vain.

6:2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the time of favor; behold, now is the day of salvation.

6:3 We make it our aim to do nothing that might cause anyone to stumble, so that no one may find fault with our ministry.

6:4 But in everything we commend ourselves as servants of God. We have shown ourselves to be servants of God in every way: in great endurance, in troubles, in distresses, in calamities, in

6:5 beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labors, in sleepless nights, in hunger,

6:6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,

6:7 the word of truth and the power of God, and by the weapons of righteousness held in both hands—

6:8 whether praised or blamed, whether slandered or commended—we present ourselves as servants of God. We seem to deceive, yet we are truthful;

6:9 we seem unknown, yet we are well known; we seem to be dying, yet behold, we live on; we seem to be punished, yet we are not killed.

6:10 We seem to be sorrowful, yet we always rejoice; we seem to be poor, yet we make many rich; we seem to have nothing, yet we possess everything.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

5:2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

5:3 Not only that, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

5:4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

5:6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

5:7 For scarcely anyone would die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die.

5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

5:10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

5:11 Not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

In this season of Advent, we have once again tasted that the One who can do all things is also merciful and full of forgiveness. Now is the time to leap forth into the light by the Lord's mercy, to live boldly forgiven, illuminated by the light of joy and blessing.

◇Prayer; Heavenly Father God, we thank You for today's worship. We thank You for restoring Zechariah with Your forgiveness and healing. Though our own walk sometimes falters when self prevails, stability wavers, trust weakens, and shadows of darkness fall, we thank You that You announce the dawn with the light of the morning, guiding us back into light, life, peace, and tranquility. We thank You for Your mercy and forgiveness. Please lead all those who suffer into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and our neighbors. Use us. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.