DAY 5

LUKE 1:18–25

And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

The announcement of John's birth was extraordinary. God chose two people, Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, to raise His messenger John. Zechariah asked for a sign and a sign was given that stayed with him for nine months. He became mute, until the birth of his son. Meanwhile, Elizabeth "kept herself hidden" for

five months, most likely until it was clear that she was expecting. Both of them became living signs of God's pressing, yet seemingly unbelievable, reality. The miraculous birth of a son to two people well advanced in age.

Similarly, we might be tempted to doubt the reality of Jesus' second coming, and the unfolding of His Kingdom. We live in this tension of the Kingdom already and not yet. There are markers in our lives that point us to know that yes, the Kingdom is here. And there are those things that tempt us to doubt and ask ourselves, like Zechariah, "How shall I know this?"

The words of Jesus in John 14:3 stand true: "I am preparing a place for you, I am coming again and I surely will receive you to Myself." The Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel. His return is certain, and there are still people in need of hearing His story. We have the chance to help tell that story to a watching world. Let Advent be a reminder to each of us of the King who came into the world and who will come again.

REFLECT

How is God calling us to move this Advent season in faith and anticipation of the pressing reality of the Kingdom? How can we live our lives this Advent season in anticipation? Is there someone in our life who we can share the good news of Jesus with?

PRAY

Lord, let me be ready to receive you when you come again. Let me receive your words and life with faith. I pray that today I may be reminded of those markers you have given me—Your Holy Spirit and your Church. May they strengthen me and stir me to walk out all that you have commanded. It's all for your Glory. Amen.