

Luke 1 pt 5

Luke 1: 57-66 (NIV)

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

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

⁶² Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

1. Luke writes to Theophilus
2. In our last study, Luke was painting a picture of what believers are to look like
 - a. **Expressions of faith**
 - i. Unity, Inspiration, Praise

3. In today's study, Luke is painting a portrait of the Goodness of God

a. **His Mercy**

b. **His Grace**

4. In reading God's Word, we're finding 2 main characters

a. **God**, who He is, what He's like...

i. What brings God joy

ii. What grieves His heart

iii. What His thoughts are toward His creation

b. **Us**, who we are, how we respond

i. When we have success

ii. When we have failure

iii. Our different responses to God's goodness...

5. We looked at how Elizabeth and Mary showed expressions of faith

6. Now we'll look at 2 characteristics of God's nature

a. **Mercy & Grace**

b. Twins of God's character

I. Mercy

1. Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown **great mercy** to her, they rejoiced with her
2. The word here is magnificent mercy; amplified mercy
3. God's mercy is the foundation of our relationship with Him
 - a. **Lam 3:22** Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. Vs. 23 His mercies are new every morning.
 - b. **Psalm 116:5** Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful
4. **Dictionary:** compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.
5. To help us understand it better, we'll look at 3 elements of mercy
6. **Protection, Preservation (salvation), Provision**

7. Protection

- a. **A.W Pink:** Mercy is the ready inclination of God to relieve the misery of fallen creatures
- b. There are different kinds of misery that people experience
- c. Most of which is self inflicted
 - i. The poor choices made and reaping the consequences
 - 1. I.e. Drinking & driving
- d. God told the children of Israel to obey His commands and dwell in the land flowing with milk & honey
 - i. They would experience divine protection and peace all around
 - ii. Instead, they worshiped false gods and walked away from the only and true God
 - iii. As a result, they were taken captive by enemy nations
 - iv. **Even while they were captive, they were still protected by God**

- e. Just like when you and I decide to walk away from the Lord and are taken captive by sin, His hand of protection is still there to some level
 - i. As Lot was protected by the angels & Abraham
 - ii. I think about how many times I knew the truth and chose the wrong options
 - 1. How many times could things have gone seriously wrong
- f. **Neh 9:31** Nevertheless in Your **great mercy** You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them; For You *are* God, gracious and merciful.
- g. God often chooses great mercy & protection instead of judgment

8. Preservation (salvation)

- a. **1 Peter 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His **great mercy** has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

- b. Mercy is the foundation of our relationship with God
- c. There is something much more important than being protected from harmful things
- d. Our eternal home is most important
- e. God demonstrates great mercy with His Son's sacrifice offering all who will receive it, salvation, preservation
- f. He didn't just do the minimum of die in our place
 - i. He lived among us to show us the Father's heart
 - 1. He healed those who were without hope
 - ii. He fed those who were hungry
 - 1. He delivered the afflicted
 - 2. He received cruel mocking and betrayal
 - iii. He surrendered to lashes on His body for our healing
 - 1. He yielded to a crown of thorns for our peace

iv. He offered Himself willingly in our place

9. **Titus 3:5** He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy

a. Preservation (salvation) is **Great Mercy**

i. Salvation received by a simple faith

10. Provision

a. In addition to protection for people and salvation when we leave this earth, God makes provisions to help us in our everyday life

b. For a couple who were in a culture that believed they were being punished by God

c. The mercy of God provides for them in their deepest longing

d. God gave the provision of mercy to alleviate their pain

e. Instead of complaining about their bad luck or their sad state

i. They held on for decades to God's mercy & faithfulness

- ii. But I love the truth of God's Word that reveals that Zechariah did not always believe
 - iii. It gives me hope that it doesn't all rely on me
 - iv. God's mercy doesn't fail when I do
 - v. It's new every morning.
- f. This great mercy of provision given to Elizabeth is an example for us

i. **Your pain is not forever**

1. With the trial, God makes a way for you to bear it

ii. **However your unique story ends, you will experience a provision of Great Mercy**

1. God is not a respecter of persons
2. In Elizabeth's case, God is elevating her place in her community that every mouth that spoke against her would be stopped
3. Your situation may be completely different

4. Every story is unique

a. But place your trust in the provisional mercy of God

g. Whatever you need, Jehovah Jireh is our provider

h. Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life

II. Grace

1. John's name means Grace of God

a. **Coupled with the Mercy of God is the Grace of God**

2. Defined as:

a. That which affords joy, pleasure, delight, charm, sweetness, loveliness

i. The kindness of a master toward a slave

b. Grace is first mentioned with Noah

- i. **Gen 6:8** But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord
 - c. While mercy is not receiving what I should have received – punishment
 - d. Grace is giving me what I do not deserve – kindness, delight, joy...
- 3. This section helps us understand not what mercy does, but how to receive God's Grace

4. It's received

- a. It's received simply
- b. It grows increasingly
- c. It's expressed publically

5. Received simply

- a. When Zechariah completed his assignment at the temple, he was unable to speak
- b. When Elizabeth became pregnant, there wasn't much dialogue going on between them
- c. This pictures the simple receiving

- d. **To receive simply or believe with simplicity is to not complicate or debate God's goodness & grace**
- e. **2 Cor 11:3** But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the **simplicity** and purity *of devotion* to Christ
- f. This is the enemies job, to attempt to complicate the simplicity of God's Grace
- g. Just as when someone you love offers you a gift, you simply accepted it without question and enjoy the gift.
- h. ..."unless you become as little children..."

6. God's Grace grows increasingly

- a. The baby is 8 days old and growing
- b. Not that Grace grows, but we are the ones who grow in Grace
- c. **2 Pet 3:18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
- d. As a natural baby grows, we also are to grow & mature

- e. This growth in a believer is also a work of God's Grace
- f. It's not my reading, praying, serving that causing my growth
 - i. It's the Holy Spirit who we yield to and allow Him to reveal more of who Jesus is and this causes a person to grow in Grace
 - ii. It happens naturally as I continue to yield to God
- g. The baby is now 8 days and the relatives want to give him his father's name
 - i. This was the custom of their day
- h. With names having meaning and speak of destiny, our human nature wants to have a repeat of the past.
- i. Our Lord has other thoughts on the matter
- j. Although the Lord wants the name John, Zachariah and Elizabeth must agree and name him John
 - i. This again speaks of the necessary unity among us

- k. Elizabeth speaks up and says his name is John
- l. Zechariah (*Strong # 2197*) - Remembered of Jehovah
- m. Elizabeth (*Strong # 1665*) - Oath of God
- n. John (*Strong # 2491*) - Jehovah is a gracious giver

7. Perhaps why the angel said, you will call his name John

- a. **Those remembered of God embracing the promises of God will experience the Grace of God**

8. This grace will grow and be revealed to all

9. Grace is expressed publically

- a. As soon as Zechariah confirmed that the baby's name is John and Zechariah is aligning himself with God's will, his tongue is loosed
- b. The mercy of God kept him alive and well for his family
- c. The grace of God allowed him to speak God's praises
 - i. We know what he's been thinking for 9 months

- ii. He's been contemplating what Gabriel said and worshiping God
 - iii. He's been meditating on the Word of God
- d. The first thing that comes out of your mouth the moment you have an opportunity to speak is what you've been meditating on
- e. I'm sure having Elizabeth by his side was a big help
- f. Surrounding yourself with those who love God is huge
 - i. He's been praising God
- g. I'm tempted to say now they are experiencing the Grace of God
- h. **Truth is, God's grace has been with them the entire time.**
- i. It was God's grace that carried them this entire time
- j. **Psalm 124:2** "Had it not been the LORD who was on our side when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive..."

- k. They would have been swallowed up by sorrow and pain
 - i. But God's Grace & mercy carried them

- l. In our lives as believers, as we line our hearts with God's will, it's His grace that gives us a voice
 - i. Perhaps my silence in speaking God's praises to others is my unbelief like Zachariah

 - ii. When I line my heart with God's Word and His mercy
 - 1. God's praises must naturally come out

 - 2. Maybe you've been in a season of silence

 - 3. God does not want you silent forever

 - 4. Line your heart with God's Word and will and watch the floodgates open wide