

Character 1

ZECHARIAH

Scripture Passage: Luke 1:1-15

Attribute: Faithful In Prayer

And so Luke's account of the Christmas narrative begins with the introduction of Zechariah. Let's see what we can learn about Zechariah from this text.

We know he was a priest. We know he was married to Elizabeth, herself a daughter of a priest. **And we see Zechariah described as righteous.** He was a faithful guy, both obedient to God's statutes and commands, and obedient to his service in the Temple. We also know that he wasn't a young guy. He was, as verse 7 says, advanced in years.

We also learn that Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth couldn't have children. This is interesting for two reasons. One, the original audience would have realized the contrast between the description of Zechariah and Elizabeth, and the stated fact that they could not conceive a child. In the understanding of their day, the couple's bareness would have been seen as a sign of disfavor, as a sign that God was somehow punishing them for something they (or maybe even their parents) did. So the description of the couple as childless would have piqued the attention of the original reader.

The other reason Zechariah and Elizabeth's situation is so interesting is because it sets up a miraculous intervention by God. But, it also tips us off to the specific attribute we'll focus on in this devotion

Look closely at verse 13. The angel says to Zechariah that his prayers had been answered. Did you catch it? Zechariah and Elizabeth were old, way past child-bearing years. **Who would have blamed them for giving up the dream?** Experience would seem to tell them that it wasn't meant to be. But there is every indication that Zechariah continued to pray for this dream to come true. Zechariah knew the odds, but he believed God to be in the business of defying the odds. And so he prayed. Faithfully.

We know how the story ends: God's plan to send His Son to redeem humankind from the penalty of sin passed right through Zechariah and Elizabeth's house. The couple would give birth to a son, John, who would one day become the voice preparing the way for the Messiah.

It was God's amazing power that made this happen. But Zechariah's faithful prayer makes the reward even sweeter.

Food For Thought . . .

1. Has it ever hit you that the size of your faith might limit your prayers? What need or concern are you scared to bring before God because you think it's too illogical, or too impossible?
2. How do you personally deal with unanswered prayers? Looking back on how you've responded in the past, can you learn anything from Zechariah's example?
3. Think of the most steadfast, faithful person you know. How does this faithfulness impact his or her work, faith, and family?
4. How are you modeling this kind of faithfulness in prayer for the students in your ministry?