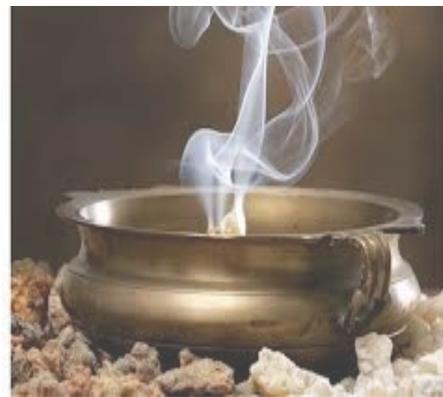


Zechariah's Song

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. Isaiah 9:7



Read Malachi 4:4-6

1. How do the Jewish scriptures end?
2. So, who were the Jews waiting for to prophesy the coming of the Messiah?

This week we started an Advent series looking at 4 songs Luke used to start his account of Jesus' life. However, the story of Jesus's birth does not start with Mary and Joseph. Instead we begin with an elderly priest called Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth.

Read Luke 1:5-25

1. What do we know about Zechariah?
2. What was Zechariah's response to the news?
3. Can you think of a story in the Jewish scriptures that is a bit similar to this?
4. What expectations might Zechariah have had?
5. Why do you think Elizabeth might have felt disgraced?

Zechariah and Elizabeth were honest, faithful and obedient. Luke tells us that they were "blameless", but they had no children. Religious people would have seen this as a sign that God did not favour them, but as we learnt last week; that simply is not true.

Read Luke 1:67-80

This is Zechariah's response to what the Lord has done. Zechariah has been silent for 9 months. In that time he has come to realise that God is about to fulfil all of the promises in the Jewish scriptures.

- In verses 68- 75, how does Zechariah identify God blessings?
- What are the words that stand out to you in what Zechariah says?
- How might the words Zechariah speaks over his son be the fulfilment of Malachi 4:4-6?

We know John the son of Zechariah as John the Baptist, he came out of the desert dressed like Elijah and preaching a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Matt 3:1-5, Luke 3:2b-3). Preparing the way for the Messiah.

Deeper in

In a moment of quietness, be still

- As we come to the end of another year, take time to reflect on the events of the past twelve months.
- Within your family, your circle of friends, within the congregation and in your own life there will be things to give thanks for and there will be times when you have felt like you yourself have been in the wilderness.
- To repent is not a demand to recite your sins and say sorry. It is a call to return to the relationship you can have with God.

Then the words of Isaiah from Luke 3:4-6. May you see the salvation that the Lord our God has prepared for you.