

Recap of 12/13/20 message (Joe Ricchuiti – Luke 1:57-80):

1. Luke 2:57-80 is the third leg of our journey to the manger. It divides into two parts. First in vv. 57-66 we have the events surrounding John the Baptist's birth including Elizabeth's joy and Zechariah's restoration after his failure to believe the Angel Gabriel. In the words of Charles Erdman: "As a rebuke to his unbelief and as a stimulus for his faith," Zechariah was struck by God unable to speak and possibly unable to hear as well (Luke 1:62). It was not removed until he renewed his faith in God and His Word. Secondly, in vv. 67-80, we have Zechariah's song of praise (called the Song of the Nativity by some) in which he praises God for the coming of Messiah and the fulfillment of His covenant promises, praising His program, character and works. He also speaks of the significant role John, his son, would play, as the forerunner to the Messiah.

2. The key thought in this passage is God's faithfulness; to His Word, to His covenants, to His people. We may fail Him but he will not fail us.

"Observe that Zechariah's previous doubt and his discipline through loss of speech did not mean the end of his spiritual ministry. So when a believer today has submitted to God's discipline, he may go on in Christ's service." (Walter Liefeld)

"It may sound ironic, but if you have experienced a lot of failure, you are actually in a better position to achieve success than people who haven't." (John Maxwell)

3. There are numerous Biblical examples of how God can use a person after failure, as with Zechariah. There is the example of Peter who denied the Lord three times, but was later restored by Jesus (Mark 14:3'; 14:71; Luke 22:60; John 21). John Mark is another example. He abandoned Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey so that Paul refused to take him on the second journey. It led to a split between Paul and Barnabas. Later however we learn that Mark later became a valuable partner to Paul (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11) and Paul and Barnabas were later reconciled.

4. Zechariah's song, as mentioned above stresses the faithfulness of God. It includes abundant Old Testament allusions, references to the incarnation, references to both the first and second comings of Jesus. The first part of the song sees salvation in political terms for Israel, the second part sees salvation in spiritual terms for all peoples.