

God's Invitation, Our Opportunity Luke 1

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Dec. 16th

It's amazing to consider that the Wondrous God of Creation invites us to partner with Him! This happened to two different people in Luke 1. God sent the angel Gabriel to both Zacharias and Mary to such an invitation, but they had to decide how they would respond.

Does God still send messengers (invitations) to us today? (Heb. 13:2) If so, we'll have to decide:

- 1) Is this really from God?
- 2) What does He want from/with me?
- 3) How will I respond?

God's Invitations will always require Faith! (Heb. 11:6)

1. Faith is Proactive! (We must act on it!) James 2:20

- The encounter/experience may have been awesome, but the orders still had to be acted upon in normal life. (We Can't stay on the mountain top! Luke 9:33)

A. Zacharias had to confront:

- 1) His own doubts. Vs 18 *"I'm an old man and my wife well stricken in years."*
- 2) His friends doubts.
- 3) Elizabeth's fears/doubts.

B. Mary still had to confront:

- 1) Her own doubts. Vs 34 *"How shall this be...?"*
- 2) Joseph's doubts (Mt. 1:18,19)
- 3) Rejection of her family and friends.

2. Faith is Progressive. (We must build on it!)

The Big assignments come to those who have proven themselves faithful with the little assignments. *Moses chose God over Egypt. Heb. 11:25 and David was a faithful shepherd before he was the King.*

Lk 16:10-12 *"He that is faithful in least is faithful also in much: he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"*

A. Zacharias had proven faithful as a husband & priest. Lk 1:6

B. Even as a young girl Mary was: *"highly favored,* (From Charis: grace!) Vs 28

3. Faith is Presumptuous. (We must Believe it!) Heb. 11:1

It presumes that God must be involved in order to make it happen! Ps. 127:1

- Zacharias and Elizabeth knew they couldn't have children. Luke 1:7

Remember Abraham and Sarah? Gen. 18:14 *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"*

Ro 4:19-21 *"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."*

B. Mary knew she couldn't have a child alone! Vs. 34 *"How can this be ... I know not a man?"*
Gabriel told her that God would do what she could not! Vs 25

4. Faith Involves a Partnership! (We must Cooperate with God!)

God is actively looking for people through whom He can work! 2 Chron. 16:9

1 Cor. 3:9 *"We are laborers together with God."*

A. Zacharias didn't initially get this. Luke 1:13-20 *"I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. ... thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."*

B. Notice the difference with Mary: Luke 1:37-38 *"For with God nothing shall be impossible. Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."*

Conclusion:

1) Faith (*pistis: persuasion, assurance, trust*) is:

- Proactive: *We must Act on it.*
 - Progressive: *We must Build on it.*
 - Presumptuous: *We must Believe it.*
 - Partnership: *We must Cooperate with it.*
- Ultimately, Faith is *"Confidence that produces Cooperation!"*

2) God's Invitations are our opportunities!

- To Develop our Faith. (2 Peter 1:5-8) *"add to your faith..."*
- To Demonstrate our Faith. (Mt. 5:14-16) *"Let your light so shine..."*
- Or to Diminish our faith. (1 Tim. 1:9) *"Made shipwreck"*
Ro 1:17-18 *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: The just shall live by faith."*

Application:

- When's the last time you heard from God?
- What did He ask of you?
- How did you respond? (*With Faith or Frustration?*)

What if Zacharias, Elizabeth and Mary had refused God's offer of partnership?

What will happen if we do?

*"Whatsoever he saith do it, though you may not understand;
Yield to him complete obedience, then you'll see his mighty hand.
Fill the pots with water, fill them to the brim;
He will honor all your trusting. Leave the miracle to him.
Bring to Christ your loaves and fishes, thou they be but few and small.
He will use the weaker vessels, give to him your "little" all.
Do not ask how many thousands, can be fed with food so slim.
Listen to the master's blessing. Leave the Miracle to him.
Oh ye christians learn the lesson; are ye struggling all the way.
Quit your trying, change to trusting; Then you'll triumph every day.
Whatsoever he bid you do it, fill the pots up to the brim.
But remember it's his battle- Leave the miracle to him.*