

**TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP****JOIN A SERVE TEAM****NEW HERE?****CONNECTION CARD****STAY UP TO DATE****SUBSCRIBE TO DIGITAL BULLETIN****Message Series: Light & Life****Message Title: Coming Light****Scripture: Luke 1:78-79; Romans 13:11-14**

The average person spends about 5 years of their life waiting, including time in lines, on hold, in traffic, and other forms of waiting. We spend a massive amount of our lives waiting. We often wait in everyday, tangible situations, which are the easy kind of waiting. We also wait for less tangible things, such as test results, physical or emotional healing, a future spouse, the restoration of a friendship, and the answer to prayers.

Throughout this series, Light and Life, we're following the theme of light throughout the Scriptures. Today we're tracing the theme of the Coming Light, light breaking in, even now, even in the waiting. During Advent, we're reminded of the time we currently live in. We live between two phrases, one from a well-known Christmas carol and the other from the last lines of Revelation. We live between "Joy to the world, the Lord has come" and "Come, Lord Jesus, come." We also live in a world of deep darkness, but the Light of the World, Jesus, has come. We wait for his coming at Christmas, and we wait for this coming again. Today, we'll step into the biblical narrative before Jesus was born to answer this question: *What do we do while we wait?*

**Waiting: Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-25)**

- In the opening chapter of Luke's Gospel, we meet an older, childless couple who had been waiting for a long time. Zechariah and Elizabeth longed for a child of their own and had prayed for a child for years.
- Luke described them as "*righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations* (1:6)."
- Zechariah served as a priest at the Temple in Jerusalem, while Elizabeth remained at their house outside Jerusalem. As was the custom, Zechariah left his home to serve for two weeks in the Temple, assisting worshipers in sacrificing and praying at the meeting place with the Lord.
- One day, the lot chose Zechariah to enter the sanctuary to burn incense. During the routine of Zechariah's work, heaven breaks in. The angel Gabriel appears with a message of good news that Elizabeth and Zechariah had stopped daring to hope for. Gabriel promised Zechariah a son.
- Gabriel described Zechariah and Elizabeth's son, who would bring them great joy. Their son, who would be John the Baptist, would have the spirit of Elijah on him and prepare the way for the coming Lord, the coming Light, Jesus.
- Zechariah doubted Gabriel's news, and his disbelief had a consequence. Gabriel announced to Zechariah that his unbelief in God's actions would result in his silence until the child was born.

How good are you at waiting? What do you typically do when you are forced to wait? Waiting is the posture of the people of God. *How do the people of God wait?*

### **We Worship God (Luke 1:68-79)**

- After their son was born, during the circumcision and naming ceremony, everyone wanted the infant boy to be named after his father. Elizabeth insisted his name would be John, and Zechariah, still unable to speak, affirmed his wife by writing John on a tablet. Luke tells us in Luke 1:64, *"Instantly, Zechariah could speak, and he began praising God."*
- Zechariah ended his song in Luke 1:78-79 describing God's salvation breaking in using the metaphor of the light of the sun dawning: *"Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."*
- Zechariah implicitly spoke about Jesus, the light of the world, who would be born a few months later.
- In the darkness of waiting, Zechariah and Elizabeth prayed in their barrenness, served God in his silence, and kept showing up for their faith. They were worshiping because darkness does not get the last word. Delay is not denial, and silence is not absence.
- The silence and weariness of the world, even in ourselves, are symptoms of our lack of worship. When God acts, the silence cannot endure because God's action demands praise. Are you worshiping God in your waiting?

### **We Wake Up (Romans 13:11)**

- The Apostle Paul picks up this light metaphor in Romans 13:11-14. *"This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed."*
- Paul says we live between darkness and day. The day is dawning, and the salvation of God has come in Jesus, but it is coming fully when he returns.
- Are you sleeping walking spiritually? The call to wake up is to recognize the urgency of our lives. The Light of Christ is coming; are we awake to see it?

### **We Wear Christ (Romans 13:14)**

- *Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness...Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.*
- Paul urges us to live differently because the light of Christ is dawning. We remove the dirty deeds of darkness and put on the shining armor of light. The call is to put on Christ daily, as we put on clothes.
- Are you wearing the life and light of Christ in the waiting? What needs to be removed from your life so that the light of Christ may shine?



#### **Advent: Born to Dwell Reading Plan on the Bible App**

Spend 20 days recounting the Bible's Christmas story from Old Testament passages and the Gospels. Slow down, worship Jesus, and cherish Him by faith. Receive and rejoice in God's greatest gift. Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh to dwell among us. Scan the QR to set Harvest Spings as your church and join the featured plan.