



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of December 9, 2018

Luke 1:68-79 *Tender Mercy*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Luke 1:68-79](#).

- When Herod was king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. But they had no child because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. ([Luke 1:5-7](#)). But God, desiring to show that He regards the broken-hearted and that human weakness and inability cannot stop His determination to be merciful and gracious on their behalf, sends the mighty angel Gabriel with a word for old Zechariah:

“Your prayer has been heard and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth; for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the Spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.” ([Luke 1:13-17](#))

- Zechariah couldn’t believe the news. And said as much. So Gabriel responded with indignation:

“I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And, behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” ([Luke 1:19-20](#))

- Nine months later Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist. At the child’s circumcision the neighbors started to call the child Zechariah after his father, but, in obedience to God, Zechariah wrote on a tablet: “His name is John.” And immediately his tongue was loosed and he was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Allow a few words about this experience of Zechariah and it is this: If we don’t seek out silence, we will probably not feel the stupendous significance of God’s work in history on our lives. It would be a rare thing to be gripped and moved deeply in a noisy room, or with the constant draw of media.
- From apparent unbelief to past tense (68-69)
- Only two verses in this song are about his son, the rest is about someone else’s son: The story of John’s-- and our-- lives.

A WREATHED garland of deservèd praise,
Of praise deservèd, unto Thee I give,
I give to Thee, who knowest all my ways,
My crooked winding ways, wherein I live,—
Wherein I die, not live; for life is straight,
Straight as a line, and ever tends to Thee,
To Thee, who art more far above deceit,
Than deceit seems above simplicity.
Give me simplicity, that I may live,
So live and like, that I may know Thy ways,
Know them and practice them: then shall I give
For this poor wreath, give Thee a crown of praise.
(A WREATH, *George Herbert*)

- The horn of salvation: Jesus is a deadly weapon
- Back now to Luke 1:69. Jesus is the horn of salvation because He is a deadly weapon and tremendous power which, according to verse 71, God uses to save His people from their enemies and all who hate them. Zechariah means primarily; that the Messiah will one day literally destroy His enemies and gather His people into his land and rule them in peace.
- The Horn. Verses 74 and 75 show that the goal of God's redemption in raising up a horn of salvation is to "grant that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." God's aim in raising a horn of salvation is not merely to liberate an oppressed people, but to create a holy and righteous people who live in no fear because they trust him.
- This weapon destroys not so much the Roman oppressors but fear and guilt-- the two great life spoilers.

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WEPC Lectionary Project: *Union with Christ*

West End Presbyterian Church is using the Scripture readings recommended by the Revised Common Lectionary as a framework for our corporate worship and our personal and family devotion. This project is part of WEPC's 25th Anniversary Year and will run from December 2018 through November 2019. The Lectionary gives us access to the whole counsel of Scripture and these texts are a means for us to grow in our understanding of our union with Christ.

To learn more and subscribe to a daily email of Daily Scripture Readings, visit www.wepc.org/lectionary

Second Sunday of Advent, December 9, 2018

Malachi 3:1-4
He Refines & Purifies

Luke 1:68-79
God's Tender Mercy

Philippians 1:3-11
A Harvest of Righteousness

Luke 3:1-6
Prepare the Way of the Lord

Reflection on Sunday 12/9

Monday

Isaiah 40:1-11
The Earth Prepares

Romans 8:22-25
All Creation Groans

Tuesday

Isaiah 19:18-25
All Nations Shall Praise God

II Peter 1:2-15
Living God's Call

Wednesday

Isaiah 35:3-7
God's Advent Will Change Everything

Luke 7:18-30
John the Baptist Questions Jesus

Daily

Psalm 126
Prayer for Restoration

Preparation for Sunday 12/16

Thursday

Amos 6:1-8
Self-Indulgence

II Corinthians 8:1-15
Generosity

Friday

Amos 8:4-12
Do Not Trample the Needy

II Corinthians 9:1-15
The Fruit of Giving

Saturday

Amos 9:8-15
God Will Set Things Right

Luke 1:57-66
The Birth of John the Baptist

Daily

Isaiah 12:2-6
The Holy One in Your Midst