

THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

By: Jan Davis

Today is Tuesday, December 10 and this is the second week of the season of Advent. We are studying the song of Zechariah recorded in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed and Holy Lord, my heart is full of hope this Advent season as I anticipate the celebration of the birth of Your Son, my Savior, Jesus Christ. In the early morning of a dawning December day, I seek Your presence. I calm my thoughts, still my mind and reflect on the words of the priest Zechariah, whose journey of silence became a journey of faith. Let me hear the message you have for me today through the words of this ancient song. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John." They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name." Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. Luke 1:57-64

REFLECTION

My husband and I are blessed with three grandchildren and a new one is on the way. Our daughter is pregnant with her second child and recently she and her husband felt those first kicks. I remember feeling those first baby kicks clearly, even though it was a long time ago. Pregnant with my first child it was not until some substantial physical evidence arrived that the truth of a baby growing inside of me seemed real. My husband was right there alongside me on the nine month journey. We heard the first sound of the baby's heartbeat in the doctor's office. In awe and wonder, we realized that it was not my heartbeat, but our child's heartbeat. We saw a first glimpse of the tiny baby on the then new sonogram, not nearly as advanced as the sonogram technology of today. Then one evening when we were home alone together we felt the baby move. We experienced that first kick. The miracle of new life inspires joy, wonder, awe and amazement.

After a nine month journey of silence, mute and unable to speak, Zechariah utters his first words. He agrees the baby's name is to be John and then he breaks out into a song praising God. What happened to Zechariah in the course of those nine months that changed him from a negative, grumpy, "You expect me to believe this?" skeptic to a man of joy, wonder, awe and amazement? Zechariah was there beside Elizabeth to see her belly grow, hear a heartbeat that was not her own, and then there was that miraculous day when the baby moved. That first kick. Feeling life inside of the woman he loved, the life he questioned skeptically, scoffed at and

doubted. Zechariah sat alongside Elizabeth as their miracle baby grew within her and he shook his head in joy, wonder, awe and amazement. God did this! It was God.

What sort of evidence will it take for you to believe God's goodness, power and promises? What needs to kick you in the gut for you to realize that God is working for good in your life and in the lives of your loved ones. What will it take for you to have faith in the power of prayer? When will you believe in Christmas miracles? Pray. Have faith. Don't be surprised if your negative skepticism turns into a whole lot of joy, wonder, awe and amazement.

Ask: How can I devote myself to prayer this Advent season? What miracles should I pray for asking in faith - for myself, for my loved ones, for others, for the world?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

My blessed Lord, You are holy, You are mighty, You are powerful, and You are God. Thank You for loving me even when I doubt Your power and goodness. Bring to my mind the people and things I should be praying for this Advent season. Help me find times of silence and places of quiet rest, where I can lift prayers to You for myself, others and the world. Give me a heart of faith that believes in Your power and worships You with devotion. Fill me with joy, wonder, awe, and amazement this Christmas. Amen.