

YOUR TESTIMONY WILL CAUSE AWE

(AWE lead to feeling a diminished sense of self, an overwhelming feeling of reverence)

TEXT: LUKE 1:5-21, 57-66

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. ⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.” ⁶¹ They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.” ⁶² Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.”

⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ **All the neighbors were filled with awe**, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him.

There are key take away from the story we just read:

1. When the people heard that Elizabeth had given birth to John, they were not filled with AWE. All they did was “rejoice with her” - they shared in her joy. They probably saw it as the natural thing to happen:

- A pregnant woman must give birth, anyway.
- Women would think, after all, we also gave birth.
- Men would think, our wives also gave birth, so no big deal!

2. However, when Zachariah’s mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ All the neighbors were filled with awe.

Both events were testimonies but only one caused an awe.

3. The one that caused an awe was the one that ought to have made Zachariah to abandon God because:

- God inflicted on him a pain that caused mal-functioning of his body. He who was once normal went dumb and could not speak.
- God inflicted a pain that should ordinary bring shame to a man – everyone saw that this righteous person went dumb.
- No one was sure if Zachariah was ever going to be healed.
- Zachariah had every reason to claim right before God - prior to this sickness, he had been a very righteous man:
 - From birth: Luke 1: ⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly.
 - Prayerful: ⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.
 - Zachariah's offence could be considered small: Luke 1:¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and

my wife is well along in years.”

4. But Zachariah did not claim right and did not allow the sickness to reduce his confidence and trust in God:

- ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for **he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak – he was not dismayed but confidently changed his communication channel since he could not speak.**
- ⁶² Then they made signs to Zachariah, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.”

Brethren, Bible admonishes us saying:

a. James 1: ² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Zachariah, though righteous, needed to mature and be complete.

b. 2 Corin. 4: ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart.

Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

God's thoughts over His children are thoughts of good, to bring them to expected end (Jer. 29:11)

When Zachariah came out of his momentary troubles,

- **Zachariah's testimony caused awe:** ⁶⁵ All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things.
- **God was glorified** ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

- Zachariah matured further and even composed a song for God:

- ⁶⁸ “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

Brethren, it did not now matter that Zachariah and Elizabeth were once barren, it did not matter that God inflicted pain on the righteous Zachariah, What now mattered was that through those barrenness and pain,

- Zachariah’s testimony caused AWE
- ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this (the testimony) wondered about it, feared and glorified God
- Zachariah’s testimony brought salvation to Israel.

No matter the affliction you go through, focus on the AWE it will cause, the GLORY it will bring and the multitude of people that would be saved through your testimony of freedom.

GOD BLESS YOU!