

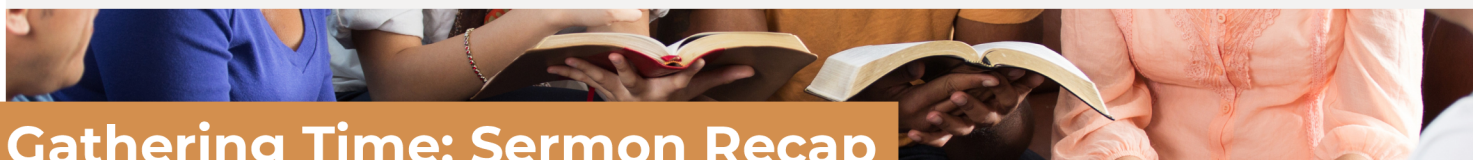
## How to Use This Guide:

- **Read the Sermon Recap** by yourself (for devotions) or with your group. You can also watch the sermon on YouTube @CBCFamily.
- **Read the passage/s.** Look for truths, promises, and/or commands. Try to find the “who, what, when, where, why, and how.”
- **Group Time:** First, take turns reading the Scripture passage/s from the sermon, round-robin style, letting each person read one verse. Go around the circle until the whole passage has been read. Then, **utilize the Group Time** portion of this 4G Guide.

### What's a 4G? A guide that covers:

1. Gathering Time (Sunday morning)
2. Group Time (for group meetings)
3. God Times (personal and family devotions)
4. Give Time (a prompt for reflection)

- **Personal God Time:** Use these each day to dive into the passages further and challenge yourself to apply the texts.
- **Family God Time:** Use these each week to dive into the passages with your family.
- **Give Time:** Ask your group, yourself, or your family what might be a good response to the sermon or text? How are you inspired to give of your time, talent, or treasure?



## Gathering Time: Sermon Recap

### Zechariah's Song

This week, Bishop Helsley preached the next message in our series called *Christmas Playlist*. This series examines biblical “songs” (poetic prayers of praise) about the Savior. In today’s message, Bishop preached on Zechariah’s Song. The context and song can be found in **Luke 1:5-23 and 67-80**.

Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, were a righteous couple from the priestly line of Aaron. Even though they were in their old age, they wanted a baby. When it became time for Zechariah to serve as priest in the Temple, God did something special to let him know that He had heard his prayers!

God sent the angel, Gabriel, to Zechariah with a message. Gabriel told Zechariah that God had heard the couple’s plea for a child, and He would give them a baby that they should name John. Instead of responding with belief, Zechariah doubted this message from God. It must have seemed too good to be true! Because Zechariah did not believe God, he was struck mute until the baby was born.

After the baby was born, Zechariah wrote the baby’s name on a tablet and Elisabeth announced it. Zechariah’s mouth was then opened, and he regained the ability to speak. His first words were praise and prophecy. It is a lesson for us: if we doubt God, we should repent, then commit to obedience and praise!

Zechariah’s praise and prophecy are sometimes called a “song”. In it, he praised God for keeping His promises to Israel because he knew God was bringing a Savior. He recognized that God battles for people’s hearts, and he knew that his son, John, would be instrumental in being the prophet of the Most High. He would prepare the way for the Messiah. In the midst of spiritual darkness and a long, long wait, the light of the Messiah was finally on the horizon!

God is still at work today, bringing light and peace. Do you walk in the Light of Jesus or in darkness? Are you full of joy? Do you have peace that only Jesus can give? Embrace the Light to find joy and peace today. Trust in God and watch Him do the miraculous.

## Conversation Starter

Ask: Have you ever experienced total or almost total darkness? When? What was it like?

## Discussion Questions

Choose a track, mix and match, or do them all.

- **Track 1:** What is the biblical context of Zechariah's song? Why did he praise God? What/who was he prophesying about?
- Some Bible versions call this "song" a prophecy. What words are prophetic? What words are more like a poetic "song", showing rich emotion and praise?
- If you didn't know much about the Lord, what could you learn about Him from this passage?

- **Track 2:** How did Zechariah respond to God before and after John's birth?
- What steals your joy and peace? How does praising God help you trust Him more?
- What's the difference between God's peace and the world's "peace"?

- **Track 3:** What verse or themes from Zechariah's song resonate most with you?
- Read verses 69-75 and Genesis 12:1-3. How did God bless all the nations through Abraham's family? (The answer is in Zechariah's song.)
- Jesus came to be the Light for all people. Who will you share His light with?



## God Time: Personal

Use the sermon notes from our Gathering Time this week for your personal time with God. Use a spare notebook or your favorite device to journal your responses. Include prayer and application in your time with God!

- **Monday:** Read Luke 1:13-19. What stands out to you? Why?
- **Tuesday:** Read Luke 1:18-23 and 67-68. Compare and contrast Zechariah's response in these passages. How do you tend to respond to God?
- **Wednesday:** Read Luke 1:67-71. What stands out? Why?
- **Thursday:** Read Luke 1:72-75. Why does Zechariah say God sent the Savior?
- **Friday:** Read Luke 1:76-80. What words point to what John will do? What words or phrases point to what the Lord will do? Now read John 1:3-11. All mankind has a choice: embrace the Light or walk in darkness. Who do you need to pray for? Who do you need to share the Light with?



## God Time: Family

Parents: Familiarize yourself with sermon recap from our Gathering Time. Sum it up in a way your child can understand.

- Consider **reading** Luke 1:67-80 from an easy-to-read Bible version (like the ERV).
- Give a **summary** statement like: "Zechariah was an old priest. He and his wife wanted a baby. When the Lord promised Him one, he didn't believe Him. But when the baby was born, he praised God and spoke words of joy and promise over his son, John. Zechariah learned to trust God."
- **Ask:** Can we always trust God?
- **Say:** Yes, we can always trust God; He can do anything, and He loves us so much!
- **Activity:** Talk about the people or things that you put your trust in. Next, have a family member put a blindfold on. Now, choose a leader to lead them around the house, avoiding dangers. Take turns. Then talk about trusting your leader. Finally, talk about how safe it is to trust God!

**Give:** *How does this week's sermon inspire you to give of your time, talent, or treasure?*