

Sometimes following God's ways seems not to bring God's blessings

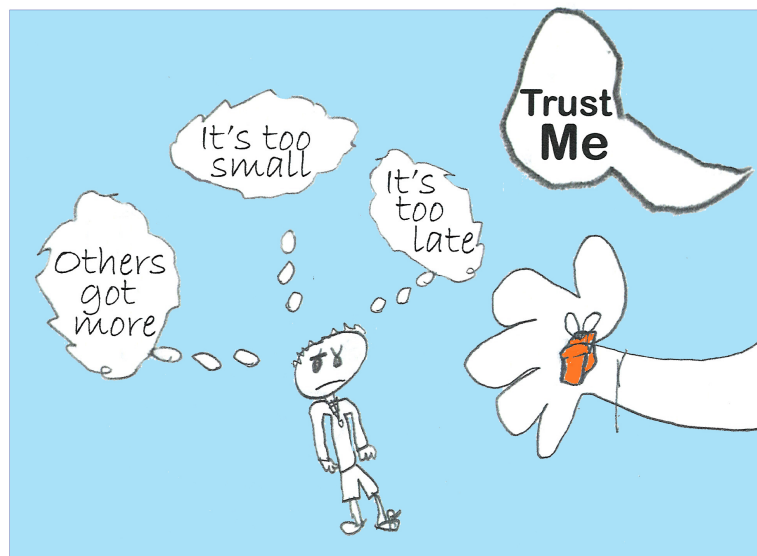
- Have you lived this?
- Are you living it today?
- Is someone you love living this today?

1

The Good Gifts of the Good God

Luke 1:5-25

Chinese page 1654
 Spanish page 1294
 English-Green page 760
 English-Brown* page 1024
 * **larger print**



2

Luke 1:5-25

5-7: Sometimes following God's ways
seems not to bring God's blessings

8-20: • Zechariah & Elizabeth

21-22: • honored God the best they could

23-25: • yet they had the deep public shame and vulnerability
of having no children

- Also true for all Israel: "400 silent years"
- "Zechariah" means "The LORD remembers"
- There is hope!

Chinese page 1654
Spanish page 1294
English-Green page 760
English-Brown* page 1024
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3

Luke 1:5-25

5-7: Sometimes following God's ways
seems not to bring God's blessings

8-20: God hears & answers prayer! Yet faith can be hard

21-22: • God heard the prayers of a discouraged man

23-25: • God heard the prayers of a discouraged people

- God's plan: bring joy and gladness
 - Not when and how they wanted
 - Yet God's intention: bring genuine life to a dying world
- It takes courage to believe!
 - Zechariah lacked courage
 - God kindly gave him a "teaching sign"

4

Luke 1:5-25

5-7: Sometimes following God's ways
seems not to bring God's blessings

8-20: God hears & answers prayer! Yet faith can be hard

21-22: The people wondered about God's actions

23-25: • They knew that God was doing something!

- They didn't understand yet

5

Luke 1:5-25

5-7: Sometimes following God's ways
seems not to bring God's blessings

8-20: God hears & answers prayer! Yet faith can be hard

21-22: The people wondered about God's actions

23-25: The promise was fulfilled, for a time in secret

- Elizabeth gave praise to God
- Zechariah's praise was postponed
because of His unbelief

6

The Big Idea

God's promises will always come true
 They are not stopped by our unbelief
 Yet our unbelief postpones our joy
 or can make us miss His goodness altogether

7

Implication

- God's plan is to bring life and joy
 - Jesus said: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; ***I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.***” *John 10:10*
 - Paraphrasing the angel: God's work will be ***a joy and delight*** to you, and many will rejoice because it. *from Luke 1:14*
 - In ***His time and in His way***, which usually is not in our time and in our way
 - His gifts of life and joy are never ***fully*** known in this life
 - So it always requires trust...

8

Application

- God's plan is to bring life and joy
- We must trust God to fully experience God's joy and work
 - “But **when you ask, you must believe and not doubt**, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.” *James 1:6-7*
 - “Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. **Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord**, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” *1 Corinthians 15:58*

9

Application

- God's plan is to bring life and joy
- We must trust God to fully experience God's joy and work
 - In obedience and prayer
 - Obedience, prayer, and good works can all be done without trust → and this removes their power
 - Obedience, prayer, and good works done as expressions of trust are powerful!

10

Application

- God's plan is to bring life and joy
- We must trust God to fully experience God's joy and work
 - In obedience and prayer
 - In hope
 - Obey Him with joy in His promises even when His ways don't look good from our perspective

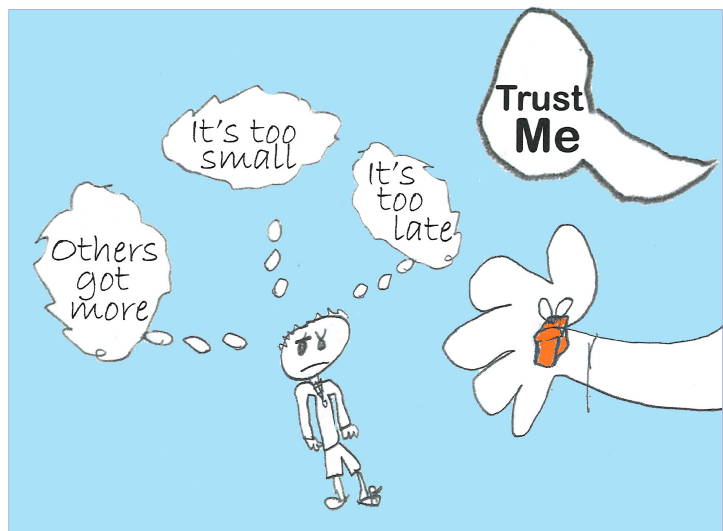
11

We leave God's gifts unopened...

- * by doubting Him
- * by disobeying Him

We "open" the gifts of God...

- * by trusting Him
- * by obeying Him



12

In you, Lord my God,
I put my trust.

**No one who hopes in you
will ever be put to shame.**

Psalm 25:1, 3

13

The Big Idea

God's promises will always come true

They are not stopped by our unbelief

Yet our unbelief postpones our joy
or can make us miss His goodness altogether

**Sometimes following God's ways
seems not to bring God's blessings**

Yet no one who hopes in God will ever be put to shame

14