

The Birth of John the Baptist Luke 1:57-80

It's Ok to Say No: following John's birth Zechariah and Elizabeth's friends and relatives are full of joy. In their joy they try to name the baby after Zechariah. Elizabeth says 'no'. There are times when it's right to say 'no', regardless of the fallout. That is true for parents and it's true for all of us. We are surrounded by well meaning people who, without knowing it, may try to deflect us from God's path. That's the right time to say 'no'.

Learning the Lesson: when Zechariah is asked what the boy should be called he says 'his name is John' – he already has a name, the one God gave him. Zechariah has learnt his lesson. He has learnt that what God says, He will do. He has learnt to take every word of God seriously and that when God calls you to do something you obey. Those were good lessons to pass on to John.

When we face difficulties and adversity, we can react in one of two ways: either we resent it and harden our hearts to God, or we humble ourselves to try and learn the lessons God is wanting to teach us through this time. And when Zechariah gets his voice back he immediately praises God. He doesn't blame God or think 'you can't treat me like this'. He has learnt the lesson he needed to learn and his heart overflows in blessing.

Making Much of Jesus: Zechariah at last has a longed for son, but when given the chance to speak, speaks about Jesus, the coming Messiah. He puts Jesus before his son. Though we love our families, if we put them before Jesus they become idols and that will mess them and us up. John still gets blessed, but by a father putting Jesus first.

And filled with the Holy Spirit, Zechariah starts making much about Jesus. That is what the Holy Spirit does. He glorifies Jesus. And Zechariah realises that Jesus' coming will fulfil God's promise to David and to Abraham and be the culmination of everything God spoke through the Old Testament prophets.

And the reason Jesus has come, Zechariah says, is to deliver us from our enemies that we might serve God fearlessly. If we get our enemies wrong we fight the wrong battles. Our real enemies are sin and satan and Jesus defeated them both at the cross. And He did so, that we might serve God, and live for His glory and not for ourselves.

Still Growing Strong

John grows: not just physically but spiritually. And so does Zechariah. You don't have to be young to grow. All of us can grow by feeding ourselves on God's word, worshipping Him and trusting what He says.