

Week 2

Sermon Series: Songs of the Savior

Sermon Title: Rejoice Barren Woman

Sermon Text: Luke 1:5-25

Group Week of: March 19, 2023

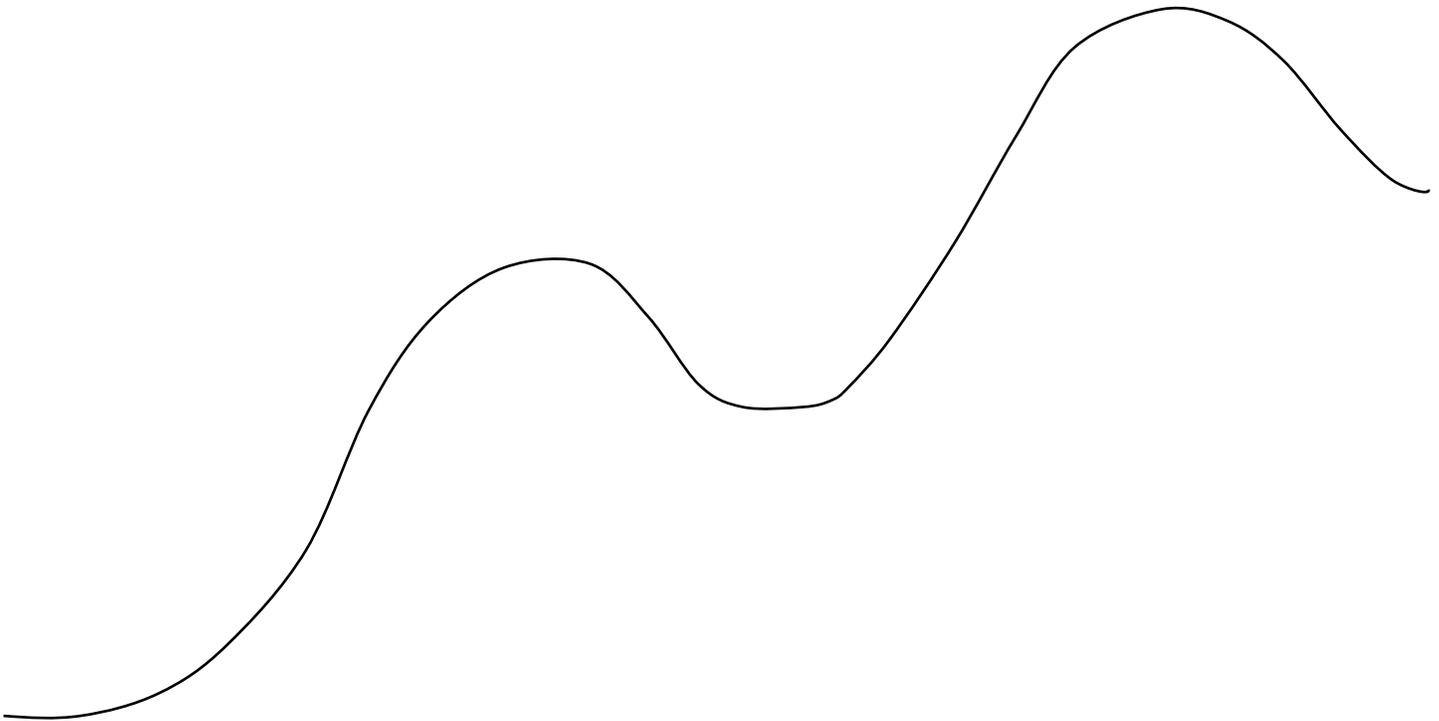
Sermon Date: March 26, 2023

Scriptures for Additional Daily Studies

Day 1	Barren Hannah – 1 Samuel 1:1-28
Day 2	Barren Sarah – Genesis 18:1-15
Day 3	Barren Rachel – Genesis 30:22-24
Day 4	Prophecy of “Elijah” – Malachi 4:1-6
Day 5	Abraham’s Faith – Genesis 15:1-21

The Text

- 1) **Read** the text slowly and carefully.
- 2) **Pray** for understanding, insight, and transformation.
- 3) **Fill in Plot Arch** by writing down versus in the story as points on the plot line to help show you where the main lessons in the story are.
- 4) **Answer** the interpretive questions at the bottom.



Textual Questions

- 1) What is the message that God and Luke are speaking to Theophilus (and to you) through this text?
- 2) Why would the story of Jesus begin with Zechariah and Elizabeth?
- 3) Why is Zechariah made mute?

Discussion Guide Questions

- 1) Consider for a moment how God uses barren women. Sarah, the mother of Isaac (Gen 12-21). Rachel the mother of Joseph (Gen 30). Hannah the mother of Samuel (1 Samuel 1-2). Each of those stories is echoed in this story of Elizabeth, the mother of John. What do you think God wants us to know about barren women and His sovereign plans?

- 2) In verse 25, Elizabeth says God has taken away her disgrace among the people. How does understanding God's use of barrenness in these women affect your understanding of how God is at work in broken, even shameful, situations in your life?

- 3) Zechariah had been a faithful priest and no doubt understood God's word fully. He knew the stories of Abraham & Sarah, Jacob & Rachel, and Elkanah & Hannah. He also surely knew of the prophecy given to Malachi that the angel Gabriel mentioned in his message. His example reminds us that even stalwart and faithful believers struggle to believe in God's miraculous working. As you go along in your journey with the Lord, are you more or less skeptical of God's miraculous power in your life or in the life of your family? Why?

- 4) When Zechariah doubted the sign of the appearance of the angel Gabriel, the angel Gabriel gave him another sign that the promise would come true: Zechariah became mute. Does God ever teach us that He is faithful and will fulfill promises through discipline? Is there any way to tell if the pain we go through is God's discipline, a work of the enemy, or just the curse of sin?

- 5) Review the promise of what John would be like to Zechariah. What work did John the Baptist do to help prepare the people for the coming of their Lord? Is there anything from that list that you can do in the lives of unbelievers around you to help prepare them for Christ? (Remember that this work is a gift and work of the Holy Spirit, not a work of human effort.)

- 6) God fulfilling His promise to send "Elijah" to prepare the way of the Messiah reminds us that God is faithful to fulfill His promises. What promises of the Lord do you need to rely upon this week? Share them with your life group as well as the reason why you are especially needy of *those* promises. Ask them to pray for you and for God's perfect timing. As 2 Peter 3:9 reminds us: *⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*