



### Advent Reflection for Wednesday, December 14th

For the podcast click [here](#) to listen.

Luke 1: 67-80

John's father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

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Reflection by Allie Senyard:

What a passage! Zechariah spends all of his wife's pregnancy struck silent by God and the first thing he does when John is born, is to praise God! I cannot relate to losing the ability to speak, but I can relate to feeling unheard by God. As I finish up the semester, I am reminded of how quickly graduation approaches, where I should be able to answer the question of what I am doing with my life, or at the very least, what is next. Seminary came out of the blue for me and seemed counterintuitive for someone who did not want to work in the church. I felt as though I was acting in obedience to something God was doing in and through me. But here we are, almost three years later, and it seems that I have gotten no word from God, no

clarity, and no direction. As far as I am concerned, to God, I have been silent...I know it feels like God has been silent toward me.

I am amazed at Zechariah's response to what I would see as cruelty and it leads me to wonder how he could feel like this. Then it hit me. God did the impossible and gave Zechariah the desire of his heart...even moreso, God used the son he gave to Zechariah to prepare the way for Jesus. So I started thinking, what if my desires have not even scratched the surface of God's plans for me. I know I am not promised success or ease or the next child of God, heck, the passage even says that the John the Baptist, this promised child, goes into the wilderness, it doesn't quite feel like God's favor. What if the silence that I feel is not a punishment, but a gift? To watch as God unfolds a story and allow myself to be shaped and softened by all of the things I get to hear when I am forced to listen. I feel a pressure to be able to answer the ever-present question of "What's next, Allie?", but what if I actually accepted the invitation to not answer...to be quiet? In Zechariah's silence, he saw God and all God had done for him. This passage makes me think that God is in the silence. Rather than racking my brain to determine what God has been doing, I want to be quiet and see if I notice.

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Allie Senyard is in her third and final year at Princeton Theological Seminary, in pursuit of her Masters of Divinity. Prior to attending seminary, she taught music, songwriting, and directed the choir at a middle school outside of Nashville, TN, while pursuing other musical endeavors on the side. She has worked as the music leader in churches of various denominations and, as a pastor's kid, has been involved in church her whole life, but is grateful for the opportunity to learn from the leadership and congregation Holy Apostles.

