

Lions Roar 7-8-20

Musings from Mrs. Stout

Happy July to you! We are in the middle of summer. I thought we might need a reminder since the weather may be making us wonder!

I have set a goal this summer to read through the New Testament, and this week I began reading the book of Luke. Chapter 1 starts out with the story of Zechariah, a Jewish priest. He is married to Elizabeth and verse 8 says they are both righteous in God's eyes. They are incredibly old and have no children because Elizabeth is barren. It is Zechariah's turn to serve God in the temple. He is honored to enter the sanctuary and burn incense in the Lord's presence. This is a big deal. While he is in the sanctuary, a great crowd stands outside praying. Then the angel Gabriel appears to him and he is filled with fear. Gabriel tells him not to be afraid for he has good news. Elizabeth is going to have a son! And oh! What a son he will be! He will bring great joy and be filled with God's Spirit. Gabriel brings this good news directly from God, but Zechariah questions the message, "How can I know this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years." (verse 20). Rather than receiving an answer to his question, Zechariah is struck dumb and can no longer speak.

Reading on in Luke 1, Gabriel again appears. This time he has good news for Mary, a virgin who is engaged to be married to Joseph. Gabriel tells her not to be afraid because God has decided to bless her. She too is going to bear a son. He too will be very great! He will reign over Israel forever and his Kingdom will never end! Like Zechariah, Mary questions Gabriel's message. "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin." (verse 34) Rather than punishing her as he did Zechariah, Gabriel answers her question and explains, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God."

Do you see the difference between Mary's question and Zechariah's? Mary asks her question in faith. She really wants to understand. Her heart is soft and eager to learn. However, according to Gabriel, Zechariah's question is asked in unbelief. "But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born." (verse 20) Zechariah asks for a sign in order to believe.

This makes me think: "Do I believe God?" Even during the uncertainty of pandemics and protests so prevalent in our world today? Do I seek God's answers with belief in my heart as Mary does? Or has my heart become cynical and critical of others? Ouch. I wish I could say I approach each day believing and trusting God with all my heart. I can't say that, but it can be my heart's desire. I can seek to walk with God, trust Him

moment by moment, and ask Him to fill my heart with compassion and love for others. I can ask especially for His compassion for others who see the world differently than I do. May this be our heart's desire day by day. May we long to understand and to love one another deeply from the heart. Psalm 139: 23 – 24 can be our prayer:

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

End of the Year Packets

If you didn't receive your end of the year packet it is because we are waiting for something to be returned, so check with the office if this is the case.

Community Service

Summer Tutoring in Rochester

Reading/Spelling/Writing for grades K- adult, Math for grades K-5. Reasonable rates, online or one-on-one in-home tutoring studio just 2.7 miles from Rochester Primary. Contact Carol Irwin at 360-273-0973 or carolirwin360@gmail.com. She also offers Instructional Coaching for home school families and free dyslexia workshops for parents.

Free Meals

"Our Nation's Ministries" have food boxes available every Saturday and individual deliveries are an option as well. Contact the ministry office at 360-807-4337 for more information.