

Doubter

Scripture Reading — Luke 1:5-18

They had no children.

Luke 1:7

In an Advent season when many of us attend at so many parties that we feel bloated by good things, it would be wise to remember that the Christmas story is set against a backdrop of emptiness.

The Old Testament repeatedly offers snapshots of couples who struggled with the emptiness of a childless home. Abraham and Sarah were old and had given up hope of having their own child (Genesis 17-18). Hannah was so distraught in her prayer for a child that Eli, the temple priest, thought she was drunk (1 Samuel 1). Why does this theme sound so often in the Bible? It's a continual reminder that we aren't in charge of our future. In each episode, God intervenes to create a future. Hope is his gift.

In the days before the birth of Christ, history repeats itself. Zechariah and Elizabeth have no children. But to them comes good news. What God has done before, God will do again.

I find a strange comfort in Zechariah's disbelieving skepticism. Zechariah reminds me that even people who yearn for God's promises to be fulfilled can become doubters when God says, "Now is the time!" Zechariah is like me-and perhaps like you. We pray for miracles of grace-then we're stunned when grace breaks into our world.

Prayer

Lord, we pray for miracles, and yet we have doubts when you break into our world in marvelous ways. Send us grace that renews and forgives, and help us to receive it. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Seasons](#), [Christmas](#)

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