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Scripture

Luke 1:57-66

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." ⁶¹ They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." ⁶² Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Devotional

While long desired, Elizabeth's pregnancy seems to have been a bit much for Zechariah to embrace. Fortunately, he had nine months to try to wrap his head around the miracle of a son being born in his old age. It seems that is how our lives unfold. We trust God to provide for us and that the Holy Spirit will help us discern God's will. Yet, it can be shocking to get a glimpse of what God is up to, and perhaps challenging to embrace the strange ways in which God provides.

Just as the nine months of pregnancy allow us to wrap our heads around the idea of a new baby, the four weeks of Advent give us time to, once again, prepare for the spectacular gift of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us. What gifts might God be calling you to name and embrace in this season?

Prayer

Generous and gracious God, help us in this season to embrace the incredible nature of your gifts. Restore in us the sense of shock and awe as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Draw our minds to the seemingly ridiculous ways you are at work in our lives, and help us to name them. Amen.