

Three Lessons about Joy from Zechariah's Life

Yesterday, we told the story of Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, in detail. Here are three lessons about joy we drew from it (but, doubtless, there are more...you could revisit his story this week and find some, if you want):



- 1) Religion, even well-practiced, can be a box in which God must stay; there is stupefying joy when God bursts free of the container in which we've tried to put Him.
- 2) Joy at God's surprising, astounding blessing is great; being able to verbalize it to others is greater yet.
- 3) In order for this child to fulfill the joyous promises given about his birth, he had to be John, not Zechariah. That is, he had to be freed to follow God's calling, and not conform to the prevailing expectations of him. This speaks to how we as parents and grandparents can free our own children and grandchildren from all outside expectations, including our own, so that they live into God's intent for them.

Scripture Reading this Week

Want to read more about Zechariah? As promised yesterday, here's a link to what we call "Zechariah's Song," his poem of praise after his abilities to speak and hear are restored: Luke 1.67-79: [Luke 1:67-79 - NRSV](#)

The Birth of John the Baptist for All Ages

This animated retelling of John's birth and naming can be forgiven for getting a few of the details wrong (i.e., Zechariah had lost both his ability to speak and hear); it's really well done...his joy simply cannot be contained: [Zechariah's Benedictus: His Name is John](#)

A Prayer for the 1st Week of Advent

By Rev. Joanna Harader (Spacious Faith worship blog):

O come, O come, Emmanuel - God with us.
Come into our brokenness;
Come into our joy.
Come into our captivity;
Come into our freedom.
Come into our fear;
Come into our compassion.
Our souls have had their fill.
Have mercy upon us, O God,
And come, O come, Emmanuel, amen.