

ChristmasSpecial Gabriel 17-12-24b

Let's pick up our study now. We're looking at the Gospel of Luke as our central passage with the appearance of Gabriel and the connections between his appearance to Daniel in Daniel chapter 8 and 9 and here in Luke chapter 1 and the significance. God could have revealed this information both to Daniel, to Zechariah, and to Mary.

I guess both doesn't work when you're talking about three people. But in both occasions, Old Testament and New, could have done it a number of different ways. Why a personal named messenger? And Gabriel is the only one.

The only reason we know Michael's name is he is described in his role as the prince of your people in warfare. He seems to be the captain of the host. He may be the one that Joshua met on the way into the land of promise.

I am the captain of the host. We don't know. Your general consensus for the angel of the Lord in general and the captain of the host in that passage by many is that it was the Lord Jesus in a Christophany, a pre-incarnate appearance.

You know my feeling on that. I don't think the Lord Jesus made appearances in the Old Testament. When the angel of the Lord speaks in the first person for God, it's because he's the angel of the Lord.

He is God's spokesperson and he has the authority to speak for God the way an ambassador to a country can speak for the United States or speak for the president. So, in any case, we're here looking at the message that is delivered to Mary six months after the message that is delivered to Zechariah and let's look at this and by the way we had a very interesting discussion here over the break before the music with our resident non-speaking, non-hearing person, expert, and looking at some of the language behind these statements about Zechariah's condition and there is the strong implication that after nine months of no speaking, if people are still making signs to him to make themselves understood, if they haven't figured out that he's only mute, he is either deaf or my favorite hypothesis that has nothing but speculation is that God may have used a disruption in the area of word recognition and formation. His ears may have worked fine and his tongue evidently worked fine.

He could eat and do everything else, but in terms of either receiving or sending speech, that little radio part of his brain was turned off by God. So he might have been able to hear people talking, but it was like hearing somebody speaking in tongues in the modern day. It just sounded like gibberish to him.

There are people who have a particular kind of stroke or they can no longer recognize speech in their own language. They just can't comprehend what's being said. But that is remedied and we'll see that here in a moment.

But what I'd like you to do is, and it's really convenient, sometimes we're flipping back and forth between Old Testament and New Testament. Keep your finger here and turn back. Well, you don't have to turn more than one page here for this next portion of the study.

First of all, you will notice the similarities in these two New Testament appearances of Gabriel. It's all in Luke chapter 1. It's just probably front and back of a page, if your Bible's like mine. So the appearance to Zechariah is in verses 11 through 20 and the appearance to Mary is in verses 28 through 38.

So these are the two sections we are going to compare and if you're a person who likes to mark his Bible, my suggestion would be to maybe circle and number these as we go because there is a direct correspondence between an element in verses 11 through 20 and an element in 28 through 38. And the easiest way, you know, if you can't draw lines across the page, and I freely mark my Bibles up, I have one that I do all my marking in so that I can read all the others. But see if this makes sense to you.

First of all, look at verse 12, when Zechariah saw Gabriel, he was troubled and fear fell upon him. He was troubled and fear fell. You probably remember the Greek word for fear.

It has come across to us in the modern English language as phobia, phobos, to have a fear of something we typically, and it has come to mean even an intense dislike. Like when they talk about people who are homophobic, I don't think people are running with fear for their physical safety. Talking about a phobia, it's really kind of a pejorative.

It's an unkind way of referring to somebody who doesn't like a thing. I don't like crowds. I had to shoulder my way through a whole lot of people last night.

I'm not agoraphobic. I'm agoradyslikic, agoradyslexic. I don't prefer to be amongst hordes of people.

I understand when Jesus said, put me in the boat and pull a little away from shore. Give me some space. So in verse 12 there, you have this fear, which is phobos, and then it says, first he was troubled, and this is the Greek word tarasso.

And this is an interesting word because it is related to the word tasso, which means to arrange or appoint or determine. And so when you get to tarasso, it ends up talking about, for example, the waters, when the waters were troubled, the lame man, nobody was there to let him down when the waters were troubled. Of course, some of that's an apocryphal addition, but it means to be disturbed in the way a sea is disturbed, to be churned up, to be confused and chaotic, not orderly.

It is the opposite of tasso, stable, arranged. Somebody's literally almost upset your apple cart, and what you had neatly stacked is now all on the floor. The dog's gotten into your trash can, and what was all in one bag is now all over the house.

Tarasso, trouble. So it destabilizes what has been carefully stacked in Zechariah's soul. And this is a point of application, if I can suggest it, which is we not only need to be dedicated and faithful and obedient and blameless the way Zechariah was, but we have to cultivate in our souls flexibility.

You get the idea that there was a rigidity, maybe, to Zechariah's life and his expectation. He's in a course, he's in an order, he's performing a service, and there's a lot of ritual and a lot of rules and a lot of comfort in the structure of all of it. And he probably prayed at the same time every day.

Daniel did this three times a day, prayed, and the whole Israelite system of worship was very orderly. We love order. We are commanded to worship decently and in good order.

But you can't let order become so ingrained and so rigid that you lose your flexibility. And if something unusual happens, the side falls off your cart and all your apples are in the street. And it's just something to remember.

When we get struck with something new, you know my motto, we are nothing if not flexible. You just have to roll with the punch. Focus on the essentials.

Go back to your basics. Bob Thieme used to talk about going back to core principles. When you get hit with something out of the ordinary, go with what you know.

Go back to the character of God. Go back to the love of God. Go back to those things that are foundational, that never change, that never fail, that hold true.

Come hell, come high water, come good times, come bad times. These things never change. Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

When we are tempted to lose our stability, we throw ourselves on the stability of God. When things are changeable in our lives, we go to the unchangeability of God. Here's the biggest curve Zechariah has ever been thrown.

Most people in human history haven't been thrown the curve of an angelic visitation and being handed a key role in the salvation plan of God. As great a believer, and don't miss it, Zechariah is a great believer. He is on the roster of the most faithful people of the Old Testament.

He is comparable to Daniel. He gets the same angelic messenger as Daniel. You remember in Ezekiel, if these three were to, and you've got Noah, Job, and Daniel.

Well here's Zechariah, he's like the fourth man here. He gets the same divine revelation as these men. So he is a great man, but all of that is good, but in the moment you've got to perform.

You've got to flex. You've got to keep on being that guy in a moment of great disturbance. So he is tarassoed.

It's like when God hurled the spirit into the sea and Jonah's on the boat. It's like when Jesus and the disciples were out in the middle of Galilee's sea and it's troubled, and that troubles them. And the Lord Jesus speaks one word, peace, and the troubled sea is calmed and the troubled souls of the disciples are calmed.

And so we turn to the rock when the sea is churning, but he is troubled and fear fell upon him. Well, when Mary in verse 28 receives the message. So if you were going to circle fear and troubled in verse 12, that would be number one.

And in verse 28, this is also number one. Actually, verse 29, I think I mistyped that. Verse 29, that's what gets from typing without looking.

She was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was. And if you look at the Greek in 29, it is a different word. It's a different form.

This is dia tarasso. Zachariah is tarassoed. Mary is dia tarassoed.

And this, as I said, dia means through. You know, the diameter is the line you draw through the center of a circle to see how wide it is. And so she is troubled through.

And you get the idea that the message penetrated more deeply into Mary. Zachariah seems to go into a little bit of denial. He says, well, how do I know? I'm not sure this is.

And so he stops the message at a more external place and begins to push back and say, well, are you sure? How do I know? Mary doesn't have that kind of questioning. You know, there's a lot that's said about Mary being pierced to the heart with sorrows and keeping all these things in her heart. When she gets the message, it goes to the very core, and she is troubled through.

She has a much greater responsibility in this whole scenario, if you will. Zachariah has got nine months to figure out what to do with this baby that's coming. Mary has nine months to figure out what she's going to do with this baby that's coming.

But she's going to be the mother of the Son of God. So just seeing the angel already goes to the very core of her being, and that's the destination for all the rest of this message. Anyway, that's in verse 29.

So that's our first point of comparison in these two messages, is how deeply does the message penetrate, and yet who handles it better? The second one is in verse 13. So you have the appearance first, and the reaction to the appearance. And then the angel speaks in verse 13 to Zacharias.

As soon as he sees the angel, there is fear and troubledness. Mary doesn't have the troubled reaction until the angel speaks. Zachariah is troubled at the sight.

She becomes troubled through at the sound. But in both cases, then the angel speaks after the initial reaction. Verse 13, the angel said to him.

In verse 30, the angel said to her, Do not be afraid. Do not fear. Verse 13 and verse 30.

The angel says, Do not fear. It's virtually identical encouragement and almost admonition in Zacharias' case. Do not fear.

In verse 13, he says, Do not fear. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. So you could circle bear you a son in verse 13.

For Mary, in verse 31, you will bear a son. So those three elements. You, the son, and it being born.

Back in verse 13, you shall call his name Yohanan. God is gracious. In verse 31, you shall call his name Yeshua.

God saves. God is merciful and God is gracious and God saves. You think about John 3.16. What are the fundamental elements in God's attitude and action in that verse? God so loved the world that he gave his son so that we don't perish.

God is merciful. God delivers. Yohanan, Yeshua.

The whole attitude and action of God is summed up just in those two names. Verse 15, talking to Zacharias, talking about John, He will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will be great in the sight of the Lord.

In verse 32, he will be great and will be called the son of the highest. John will be great in the sight of the Lord. Jesus will be the son of the Lord, the son of the highest.

The functional mission of John in verse 15 is to essentially be a Nazarite. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit out from his mother's womb.

You remember, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. The defining influence for a drunk is the presence of alcohol. Oh, he's a drunk.

He's got a drinking problem. She's a lush, or whatever they used to say. Nobody knows what a lush is anymore.

What is that? Someone can be defined by an addiction like that, where it colors everything they do. Oh, did you catch that breath? Did you see that weaving? Of course, weaving now is from texting, not from driving drunk. Passed one last night.

Just, I could tell, half a mile away. Car just bouncing on the stripes, you know, in and out. Come by, there's the glowing rectangle right on the steering wheel.

Super highway, everybody doing 75, 80 miles an hour. Better hope you don't encounter a surprise. You crest a hill and somebody has stopped in the road.

It has now become the number one cause. See, I said, I gave a statistic and I was wrong about

Gettysburg versus Sharpsburg last time. It is one of the leading causes of accidents now is distracted driving.

Either texting or trying to talk on the phone or these great big panel displays where you have to look over and navigate a tablet computer while you're driving to turn on your air conditioner or whatever. It's perfectly smooth, no tactile response. I love the old AM radio with two knobs and five buttons.

You could be driving, never take your eyes off the road. I could touch that knob with no other reference. I could reach over, I knew exactly where it was.

Turn on the radio, change the tone right behind the volume knob. Got the other knob over there four inches away to change the station. Got my five presets down below.

That's a thing of beauty. Your air conditioner was levers. You got three levers there.

You flip the top one for your temperature. You flip the next one for your fan and you got the bottom one for internal versus vent. It was simple, simple.

Your car was designed by people that were smart. But I digress. You will name him.

He will be great. And then their function is given. John, his life is going to be a sign.

His life is going to be influenced from the womb by the presence of the Holy Spirit as opposed to and often confused with the presence of alcohol. You remember what happens in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descends and everybody starts speaking in languages? And what do people say? They're drunk. These things are linked so often.

And the sign of a Nazirite is there's no way you can confuse me with a drunk man when the Spirit comes on me because I'm a Nazirite. I don't drink. See this hair? See this beard? See my lifestyle? I am not one who drinks.

So if you see a manifestation of the Spirit, just dismiss that explanation. It is not drunkenness. It's got to be something else.

Well, in the case of the Lord Jesus in verse 32, he'll be called the Son of the Highest and God will give him the throne of his father David. Give him the throne of his father David. Well, how do you know that John in his ministry was filled with the Holy Spirit? Jesus himself says John did no miracle.

John did no miracles. He is the forerunner of the Messiah and he didn't do a single miracle. What did he do? Lived in the desert.

Locust and wild honey. Wore a hairy garment. Baptized people in the Jordan.

Prepared the way of the Lord. Made his path straight. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away

the sin of the world.

No miraculous signs of any kind. He is the son of a guy who said, how do I know? He doesn't come out saying, this is how you'll know. Watch me.

Come every day at 10 and 2. I'll split the Jordan in half and you can walk across and that's how you'll know. He's filled with the Spirit. And there is one miracle associated with John the Baptist.

One and only one. The Lord Jesus is going to be given the throne of his father David. Well, nobody saw John do a miracle that proved the presence of the Holy Spirit.

And nobody saw Jesus get the throne of his father David. Both of these you take on faith. John must know what he's talking about because he's got the Spirit.

Jesus must be the Messiah because he's going to get the throne of his father David. But neither one of those was fulfilled in a visible way during their lifetime. So this element right after the name.

You either believe the name or you don't. You're not going to be given a sign. So in each case now there is a reply.

In verse 18, Zechariah says, How shall I know this? In verse 34, Mary says, How can this be? There is a difference. The message has penetrated Diataseo. It has gone to the very center of Mary.

She accepts it, but she would like to know how. She doesn't question it. And this is the order.

I've been having a discussion online about this now for a couple of weeks. There is an order in the revelation of God. There are people who want to reason their way to God.

Show me the evidence. One of my fellow moderators on a talk board that I'm on on the internet. I've known this guy for years online.

But he's not a believer. And he says, you know, the analytical mind just doesn't think this makes sense. And it appears as though God wants me to suspend my analytical mind in order to believe.

But you can see this a little bit in Zechariah and Mary. Well, how do I know this is true? Give me a proof, then I'll believe. Mary believes and says, how can this be? I believe it, but it sure seems counterintuitive.

Mary gets the answer. Zechariah is silenced. Because if an intellectual approach was the way to get to God, there would be so many people who couldn't get there.

What if you're not blessed with a lot of intellect and a whole bunch of data and the ability to sit down and parse it and analyze it and run it through a bunch of experiments? God is looking for

those who love Him because He first loved us. We love because He first loved. The portal to relationship with God is love.

And so I asked my fellow moderator. I said, well, you know, it's odd. And he was actually talking to Matt.

And I sort of interrupted. Because he said something that Matt chose to address a different part of his answer. And I went back and I said, you know, let me just take this one thing.

Because you said that God seems to want sheep and not analytical thinkers. And I said, if you remember that God is looking for people to have a relationship with, do you form your personal relationships on analytical thinking? Do you say, well, here's somebody that could potentially be a friend. Well, let me list their good points and list their bad points.

And, you know, how much time will this take? And, you know, our family relationships happen. And we love because we choose to love. We overlook faults because we choose to overlook faults.

It doesn't always make sense to have the relationships that we have. When we marry, we don't, at least most people I know, don't sit down and do a whole list of positives and negatives and say, well, on balance, I've got three more positives than I have negatives, so let's get married. Not to say that it doesn't make sense.

It is eminently reasonable. It makes great sense. Just like it does for Mary.

Well, how can these things be if I haven't known a man? God says, here is the mechanism. And Mary's analytical mind says, well, of course, if God is the author of life, he's not going to have any trouble engendering the human life of his son in my womb without benefit of a human interaction. This makes perfect sense.

But God didn't argue her into being the mother of the Messiah. She accepted that role, and he revealed to her how it was going to happen and also revealed to her that there were going to be some dismal outcomes in the short term. Just like Gabriel does to Daniel.

A sword will pierce your heart, sick for days. Seal up the vision. Keep it and ponder it.

Mary pondered all these things in her heart. That's the sign of a person of faith. You're either inclined toward a loving God who wants to unite us with himself and enable us to live with him eternally, or you're disinclined.

If you're disinclined, you can throw all the analysis at it that you want. But if you're inclined, you come first. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

All your heart. Look how many times the heart of Mary is referred to here. It happens in the heart.

The mind will follow, but the heart leads. It's God's heart to send his son on our behalf. And it is our heart, as believers, to respond.

So she says to the angel, How shall these things be where Zechariah says, How will I know? Settle my mind. Mary says, Settle my heart. I believe, but I'm diatoso.

I'm troubled through by this. It's not an easy message to take. And God gives her the information to reassure her.

So then the angel replies in verse 19. The angel answered and said to him. After this question.

In verse 35, the angel answered and said to her. Now, look at the content of the answer. In 19, the angel answered and said, I'm Gabriel.

I stand in the presence of God. I'm standing here to the right of the altar, so to speak. I bring you these glad tidings.

You're going to be mute and not able to speak until these things take place, because you did not believe my words. In verse 35, the angel says, The Holy Spirit will come upon you. The power of the highest will overshadow you.

Therefore, that holy thing which is to be born will be called the Son of God. And as a confirmation that you did not ask for, go visit your cousin Elizabeth. I know that this is troubling news.

I know that it's a momentous thing to comprehend. Here is God-tailored assurance. And notice, it's not an overt sign.

He doesn't say, now watch this. The roof levitates 15 feet off the dwelling and then comes back down. Or, behold, watch that vase over there.

And oil flows forth and never quits. He doesn't do some kind of a miracle. He says, look, I will show you another part of God's plan with other people that are involved in this part of God's plan.

You're going to see it in the lives of your fellow believers, your fellow travelers of faith. Their experience of God's power is going to be an assurance to you. So, Zechariah suffers a setback, if you will.

It's temporary, but it's a bit of a rebuke. Mary gets something she didn't even ask for, which is a confirmation in the life of her. And you get the idea that they are linked not just by blood, but by faith.

And you're going to see that God is the God of miraculous births. How do you think Abraham got a son in his old age? And we don't have time to go back and revisit all of those links. We did that when we did the Gospel of Luke, the similarities of Zechariah and Elizabeth to Abraham

and Sarah.

And, once again, how many times in the Bible do you have a God-named child? God says you will call His name. It doesn't happen very often. Genesis 16.11, Genesis 17.19, and Isaiah 7.14 are your three Old Testament namings of a child.

Right? Turn back real quick and just take a look at these because they are the forerunners of this and don't think these people didn't realize it. Genesis 16.11, Ishmael is the first child that God names. Ishmael.

You shall call his name Ishmael because the Lord has heard your affliction. Daniel, God has heard your prayer. Zechariah, God has heard your prayer.

Call the child Ishmael. Genesis 16.11. Turn the page to chapter 17, verse 19. God said, Sarah, your wife shall bear you a son and you shall call his name Yitzhak.

I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his descendants after him. So there is the name and then there is the prediction. There is the prophecy of what their function and what their role and what their future will be.

You have that with Ishmael in chapter 16. You have it with Isaac in chapter 17. You have it with John in Luke 1. And you have it with the Lord Jesus in Luke 1. The naming of the child by God.

And in between those two, in the center of your Bible more or less, the great prophet Isaiah 7.14. Remember that? Call his name Emmanuel. Emmanuel, God with us. You've got one or two other cases.

You remember Maher Shalom HaShabaz and the prophet's children as a sign to Israel. And that's a little bit different thing because it's not the person that is in view the way Ishmael, Isaac, John and Jesus are. There you have named children and it is entirely the name that is the significance.

Hurry the booty, hasten the spoil and not my people and so on. But in terms of individuals whose biography we have and whose presence was an issue, those are your individuals. So in verse 19 of Luke 1, the angel says, I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God.

I was sent. So you've got his name Gabriel. You've got the presence of God and he was sent.

Look at verse 26 with Mary. The angel Gabriel was sent by God. And as a result of the revelation, there is an and now.

Now that you've gotten this, here's what's going to happen. And so in verse 20, and now you will not be able to speak because you did not believe. In verse 36, and now Elizabeth has conceived a son in her old age.

This is now the sixth month. So there is the consequent ongoing future. Zechariah is going to

experience speechlessness.

Mary is going to experience the power of God in another believer's life because she's going to go visit. And in verse 39, when Mary arose in those days and went to the hill country, well let me say one other thing though. What is the setting for the appearance? And this gets back to our Israel church anticipation.

What is the setting for the appearance to Zechariah? Where is he? You don't get any more God on earth than the temple and the holy place. If we're not the high priest and the holy of holies. But it is there.

And Zechariah as a priest comes into God's house and God speaks to him there as it were from the throne. God's spokesperson at his right hand speaks from the presence of God. Zechariah comes to God in a ritual setting.

It's in his role as priest. What's the context for Gabriel's visit to Mary? He is sent as far away. Can any good thing come of Galilee? It is unimpressive.

It is not formal. There's no ritual associated with it. It doesn't say what Mary was doing at the time.

But it is by way of contrast. And you get the idea that John as the last great Old Testament prophet sums up even in the anticipation of his birth and his ministry everything that God was doing with Israel and the inherent shortfall that always crops up. It's a perverse generation that seeks a sign.

With all of the ritual, I'm going to have to silence you and speak in another way. So going to Mary, a young woman, a virgin, in a far off place, the last place anybody would be expecting, you would expect that Mary would have been down there offering some sacrifice and God would have appeared to her at the temple and it would have been the fulfillment of all that. But it's a completely different thing.

This ends up being, you're going to tell forth. And that's the whole role of Israel in the Old Testament is to anticipate and look forward to the fulfillment in a ritual and insufficient sense. It ultimately is insufficient.

By the works of the law, no flesh is justified. It foretells and foreshadows and anticipates the Lord Jesus. But it in and of itself doesn't get it done.

And in the same way that Zechariah essentially has a problem at the neck, so does John the Baptist. He is silenced in his prophetic ministry because that which is perfect has come. The Lord Jesus has come.

And you don't need the shadow anymore once the reality is here. So, when Mary comes and visits the house of Zechariah in verse 40 and greets Elizabeth, it happened when Elizabeth

heard the greeting of Mary that the babe leaped in her womb. This, as I said earlier, this is the one miracle associated with John.

God said, this child is going to be filled with the Holy Spirit ek, out from the womb. From the womb. He will evidence the Holy Spirit from the womb.

Well, from the womb this leaping is noticed, certainly by his mother. And she remarks on it. She says, verse 44, As soon as I heard the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

And there's a lot said about joy at Christmas time. But go back and look at what Gabriel says to Zechariah. Verse 17, He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, the disobedient, the wise and the just, make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And he says, I'm Gabriel. I stood in the presence of God. I was sent to speak to you, verse 19, and bring you these glad tidings.

So there is great joy associated with the birth and the appearance of John. And the same is true with the Lord Jesus. It is a time of joy.

With God, nothing is impossible. But that joy is founded on faith. Verse 45, Blessed is she who believed.

And you almost think that Elizabeth is kind of comparing her husband to her cousin. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord. And then you have that great Magnificat, which is another one of our Christmas specials in years gone by.

But the appearance of Gabriel is extremely significant. He is the angel of promise of salvation. That's why he appears to Daniel and says in Israel's darkest hour, the Prince is going to come.

The Messiah is going to come. It's going to be in troubled times, but he will prevail. And that's the second coming.

And then here in Luke 1, it is the first coming. And Gabriel has the privilege, I think he certainly counts it a privilege, to be the one named angel in the Bible who delivers these glad tidings of great joy, which are to all people, as he delivers it here to Mary, of deliverance and of God's working in counterintuitive ways. Nobody in Israel, remember when the wise men come, where is he born King of the Jews? We saw his star.

We've come to worship him. And in the capital city, nobody knows. Herod doesn't know.

They consult the wise men. They say, well, he's supposed to be born in Bethlehem. How did they know that? But it is not what was expected by human logic, but there were those like Zechariah and Elizabeth and Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna and others.

Remember, Anna had a whole circle of acquaintance in Jerusalem that she went around and told what she had seen. And there is that invisible yet powerful fellowship of those who believe. And it's a wonderful thing to remember how meticulously God has planned everything related to our salvation, the first coming of the Lord Jesus, the second coming of the Lord Jesus, and our opportunities to prepare ourselves and to be ready for service when that great day of the Lord comes.

So a little something to chew on for the holiday season. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for your love for us expressed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we thank you that we are the beneficiaries of your love and your grace through him. And we have peace and we have opportunities to express our love for you and love for one another in this life. And we have that great hope of resurrected life and eternal presence with him and with you in the ages to come.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will bless these truths to our heart during the holiday season and even as we visit with friends and family and exchange our gifts and reflect on the tremendous gift that you gave us in the Lord Jesus that these things will impress themselves on our hearts in a way that will bear fruit and enable us to be sacrifices holy and acceptable in your sight in our own lives. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.