

TALK IT OVER

EYEWITNESS SERIES

PART 6

3 MAY 2026

NOTES TO LEADERS

Save the date for our upcoming Men's event! Thursday, the 14th of May at 7pm. Burgers and wors rolls will be on sale from 6pm. Pre-order online to guarantee your meal.

SCRIPTURES

LUKE 1:67,68

⁶⁷ *His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:*

⁶⁸ *'Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel ...*

LUKE 1:76-80

⁷⁶ *And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him ...*

⁸⁰ *And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.*

START TALKING

- What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
- What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

START THINKING

1. Read Luke 1:76-80. What do you think it meant for John to "prepare the way for the Lord"? How might that apply to us today?
2. Why do you think God chose the wilderness as the place where John would grow strong in spirit?
3. Why do you think it is important for us to know God as our Father? What does this mean to you?

START SHARING

- Have you ever experienced a time when words spoken over you had a lasting impact (positive or negative)?
- What current "wilderness" or difficult situation are you facing, and how might God be using it to grow you?
- Steve spoke about God wanting to transform our insecurities and self-reliance. Have either of these shown up in your life recently? How is God helping you transform in these areas?

START PRAYING

- Thank God for calling us His children and for giving us an identity rooted in His love.
- Ask God to reshape any negative or untrue words we have believed about ourselves.
- Pray for clarity in purpose, that our lives would point to Jesus in both word and action.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to strengthen anyone in a "wilderness" season and to transform areas of insecurity or self-reliance into trust and confidence in Him.

START DOING

1. **Internal Thoughts:** What kinds of "inner narrator" thoughts do you tend to struggle with? Are they life-giving or limiting?
2. **Purpose Practice:** Look for intentional opportunities this week to point people towards Jesus, through encouragement, kindness, or sharing your faith.
3. **Transformation Practice:** Identify one challenging area in your life and ask, "God, how are You growing me here?" Write down what you sense Him saying.

TALK IT OVER

SUMMARY OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

For the last six weeks, we have been looking at Luke chapter 1. This chapter has 80 verses and looks at the events that precede the birth of Christ. Luke includes more detail about that than any of the other Gospel writers.

Luke chapter 1 starts and finishes with a story about a man named Zechariah (the father of John the Baptist). The Bible tells us that Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were both well past childbearing years. At the start of the chapter, an angel appears to Zechariah and tells him that a son will be miraculously born to him and Elizabeth.

Zechariah doesn't believe the angel, so the angel says to him that he is not going to be able to speak until the baby is born.

The chapter finishes with Zechariah declaring God's praises and speaking powerful words of purpose over his son, John, who has miraculously been born.

⁶⁷ *His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:*

⁶⁸ *'Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel ...
Luke 1:67,68*

⁷⁶ ***And you, my child, will be called*** a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him ...

⁸⁰ ***And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.*** Luke 1:76-80

This Sunday, we looked at three phrases from these passages that speak to three very powerful truths that God wants to speak to us today.

1. "And you, my child ..." = IDENTITY

Zechariah speaks godly words of purpose, life, and identity over his newborn son. Such a powerful gift - words that shape identity. But it also raises two important questions:

Q1: What words were spoken over you growing up?

For some, there may have been words filled with kindness, grace, courage, and faith. For others, love may have been present, but not often expressed through words. And for some, there may have been harsh or damaging words that shaped how our identity was formed.

Q2: What words did you speak over yourself? (The narrator in our heads)

All of us have an inner narrator that comments on our lives as we live them. That voice speaks not only about others, but also about ourselves. And often, those words are not life-giving. They can be critical, discouraging, and limiting. These are words that have either been spoken over us or that we have internalised and repeated to ourselves.

What stands out in these verses is the voice of a father speaking over his son. And the takeaway is this: no matter what words were or weren't spoken over us, and no matter what words we have spoken over ourselves, there is a Father in heaven who speaks over each one of us with these words: "And you, my child." This is deeply personal. God knows each person individually and speaks identity directly and intentionally.

This is one of the primary relationships revealed in Scripture: God as Father, and we as His children. This identity is not earned or achieved; it is given. It is rooted in God's choice, not human performance. It is not based on success, ability, or achievement, but on His decision to adopt and include.

In God's family, there is the perfect Son, Jesus Christ, who has fulfilled everything completely. And yet, alongside that perfection, there is an invitation extended: "And you, my child." This is the language of belonging, of adoption, and of grace.

Those words are spoken over every person. Regardless of background, age, or experience, this identity remains available and true.

2. "Will be called" = PURPOSE

Zechariah goes on to speak over his son: "*And you, my child, will be called...*" as he begins to describe the work John will do. He says, "*You will be called a prophet of the Most High, and you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him.*"

These statements may sound very specific, but they reveal something broader about purpose. A prophet is someone who speaks out, and one who prepares the way is someone who actively serves and makes space for what is to come.

In that sense, there is a shared purpose: to speak out on behalf of God and to prepare the way for His work. Identity leads into purpose. Being part of God's family carries with it a calling to live in a way that points to Him.

What is striking in Zechariah's words is that he makes it clear that John is not the central figure; Jesus is. John's purpose is to serve something greater than himself. This stands in contrast to many messages in the world today, which emphasise self-fulfilment and self-centred purpose. Yet true purpose is found in recognising that life is not centred on the self, but on God.

When purpose is understood this way, it brings clarity and freedom. Life becomes about making much of God. Speaking about Him, reflecting Him, and serving His purposes in everyday life.

Later, John himself expresses this clearly when he says, *"He must become greater; I must become less."* (John 3:30). This captures the heart of purpose: pointing beyond oneself to Christ.

Every person has unique gifts, abilities, and opportunities. These differ widely, but the underlying purpose remains the same: to honour God and to serve His greater plan.

3. "And the child grew and became strong in spirit" = TRANSFORMATION

What's interesting is that this growth happens in the wilderness. The wilderness is not an easy place; it is harsh, dry, and challenging. And yet, it is in that environment that growth and strength develop.

This reveals something important: spiritual growth is not dependent on ideal circumstances. Growth can happen even in difficulty. In fact, difficult seasons often become the very places where strength is formed.

There is a tendency to think that growth will happen once circumstances improve, once things become easier or more comfortable. But this passage shows that growth can happen in the wilderness.

The question then becomes: what are the circumstances we find ourselves in, and how might growth be taking place within them?

Challenges may come in many forms: personal struggles, uncertainty, pressure, or wider societal difficulties. Yet even within these, there is an opportunity for growth and strengthening.

The wilderness is not necessarily a place of defeat; it can be a place of transformation. It is often in these seasons that deeper work takes place, forming resilience, dependence on God, and spiritual maturity.

This pattern is seen throughout Scripture. Times of testing and difficulty often precede times of fruitfulness and impact. Growth in strength prepares for what lies ahead.

There are particular areas where this transformation often takes place. One is insecurity. Insecurity can shape how people think, respond, and relate to others. It can lead to comparison, sensitivity, and misinterpretation of situations.

Another area is self-reliance, the tendency to depend solely on one's own strength and ability. This can lead to pressure, striving, and a sense of carrying everything alone.

In difficult seasons, these areas are often exposed, not to condemn, but to invite change. There is an opportunity to move from insecurity into security, and from self-reliance into trust.

This shift is often described as moving from striving to grace. From trying to manage everything alone to recognising dependence on God.

Transformation, then, is not just about external change, but about internal strength - becoming rooted, steady, and secure.

So within these verses, three powerful truths emerge: identity, purpose, and transformation.

- "And you, my child"—identity.
- "You will be called"—purpose.
- "He grew and became strong in spirit"—transformation.

These are not just words spoken over one life, but truths that speak into every life.