

CHRISTMAS*

* ACCORDING TO CRANKY OLD MEN

Christmas According To Cranky Old Men: Week One—Zechariah

CONNECT: How does getting older make you feel? What do you *love* about the aging process? What do you *not* like about it?

GROW:

1. **Read Luke 1:5-25.** We don't know how old Zechariah and Elizabeth were; we just know they were "very old" and definitely past childbearing years.
 - o Why do you think God chose this elderly couple? (Verses 5-10 give some hints.)
 - o Do you find yourself sympathetic or critical of Zechariah's response to the angel's announcement? (Verses 18-22)
 - o The circumstances of John the Baptist's birth were unusual, to say the least. Why do you think God wanted this particular birth to be unusual?
2. God has literally seen it all, and yet He's not cynical, He's not jaded, He's not hard-hearted, He's not harsh... He's gentle. The difficult things we go through in life can either make our hearts harder or softer. Do you believe the choice between a soft heart and a hard heart is truly yours to make? Why or why not?
3. **Read Mark 1:40-42.** This story illustrates two key truths: *If God made you, he can heal you*, and *His life is more contagious than your sickness*. So what *contagious issue* are you carrying from day to day that has spread, affected, and infected every area of your life? Jesus wants to take that from you. How might you take steps to release it to Him?
4. When was the last time you decided you were going to GIVE life to others without needing to GET anything in return?
5. Jon said, "If I die tomorrow, I'll be with Jesus, and if I don't die tomorrow, Jesus will be with me." That truth is something money can't buy, Satan can't steal, and gives us hope in both death and life! But we so easily focus on things that don't matter and lose hope. Where are you prone to doubt this truth in your own life?

PRAY: Take time to thank God for all the ways He has been good, gracious, and gentle to you in your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you become more like God in these same ways.

NEXT: When was the last time you... told your spouse how much you loved them and why? ...took a friend to lunch and told them how grateful you are for their friendship? ...told your kids that you believed in them, and, of all the kids, you'd pick them *every time*?