

Week 1: Promise in the Silence

Series: Christmas: The Whole Story

Key Verses: Isaiah 9:2; Malachi 4:5–6; Luke 1:5–15; Luke 1:57–60

Speaker: Dr. Justin Hardcastle

Big Idea: The story of Christmas begins not with angels and shepherds, but with silence. For 400 years after Malachi, there was no prophetic word. But God's promise still stood. The birth of John the Baptist breaks the silence and prepares the way for Jesus. This week we'll see that God's delays are not His denials—and His promises always arrive right on time.

TRUST IN THE _____ WHAT YOU KNOW TO BE _____ IN THE LIGHT

- The incredible thing is, Isaiah's words were spoken centuries before they would come to pass.
- The final book of the Old Testament, Malachi, tells us what God was up to in those years of silence.
- Read: Malachi 4:5–6
- Malachi's words remind God's people, and us, that He is always at work behind the scenes.

GOD IS _____ TO TURN HEARTS

- God knew that for His promises to be fully received, hearts needed to be ready.
- Maybe there are relationships that are strained, hurts that have lingered, or patterns in our hearts that keep us from fully embracing the joy of Christmas.
- Malachi reminds us that God is still at work, turning hearts, restoring relationships, and preparing us to receive His Son.
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- The whole story of Christmas, even all the way back in Isaiah and Malachi, gives us eyes to see how God prepares us for the love, joy, peace, and hope that God made available to His people then.
- **Read:** Luke 1:5–15
- **Read:** Luke 1:57–60 *ESV*

GOD’S PROMISES ARRIVE IN _____

- God’s plans are never rushed, never forgotten, and never delayed without purpose.
- A period of silence that must have felt endless to Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- He is at work behind the scenes, shaping, preparing, and positioning you for His promises to come to life.
- This Christmas, remember that God is faithful.

MY RESPONSE

How can we discern what God is preparing in our lives, even when it feels like nothing is happening?

How can we actively participate in God’s work of “turning hearts” in our families, friendships, or communities this Christmas season?

What Is God Speaking to me today?:

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