

ADVENT SERMONS

# Our Dear CHRIST Enters In

WEEK 1:

**Family  
Tree**



WEEK 2:

**Home  
Hurts**



WEEK 3:

**Baby  
Names**



WEEK 4:

**Company  
Comes**



# Our Dear CHRIST Enters In

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SERMONS FOR ADVENT

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## WEEK 2: HOME HURTS SERMON

▣ Last week, we took a closer look in Matthew 1 at Jesus’ family tree. There we learned that no person is ever too messed up, broken or lost to be connected to Jesus’ family tree. Jesus came to make us at home in God’s family forever.

This week we are looking at what I call “home hurts”—those things that cause us pain and suffering very close to home. There are many home hurts that happen by their *nature* (something that we *can’t* control). Maybe a loved one has had a prolonged disease or illness, a parent or sibling is battling addiction, the former breadwinner of the family has lost a job or a wedded couple is dealing with infertility.

Other home hurts, however, happen by their *nurture* (something that *we* can control). Time spent inside the walls of many homes can reveal favoritism, neglect, forms of abuse, rivalry, abandonment, absenteeism, unfair expectations, lack of support or loneliness. Hurt can come, too, when parents try to relive their sport careers and dreams through their children, causing their children to feel inadequate or under pressure.

There can also be a cyclical aspect to hurting homes. Unhealthy patterns, behaviors, choices, communication, words and attitudes are often passed down from one generation to the next. Phrases like “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree” or “Like father, like son” have an uncomfortable level of truth about them. We’re never far from generational sin in the Scriptures either. For example, what is said of King Amon is said of many Old Testament kings: “And he

did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manasseh his father had done. He walked in all the way in which his father walked and served the idols that his father served and worshiped them. He abandoned the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD” (2 Kings 21:20-22).

In our Gospel reading today, we see another home that had its fair share of hurt, yet in and through the hurt, three Gospel truths serve to guide us when our own homes hurt. Luke writes in chapter one, “Zechariah and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years” (Luke 1:6-7). **Gospel truth #1:** Zechariah and Elizabeth remind us that faithful believers live in brokenness too. Luke notes that both spouses were righteous. Both walked in God’s words and ways. But this godly couple also grieved a lifetime of infertility, and now...both were advanced in years beyond the age of childbearing. For Zechariah and Elizabeth, it seems that hope has all but gone out the window. And if infertility wasn’t painful enough on its own, the absence of children in Judaism often brought varying levels of reproach and shame, for a woman’s greatness was measured by the greatness of the child or children she bore.

Yet, here’s the power of faith: Even with their home hurts, Zechariah and Elizabeth still walk obediently with God. Even when their life is broken and their life does not seem fair, this husband and wife resolve not to be victims. Zechariah and Elizabeth do not wallow in self-pity, dwell on all the ways they have been wronged in life, blame each other, or angrily turn away from God. Rather, they continue to walk with their Lord by faith. Their steadfastness reminds us of Paul’s words in Romans 8:37, “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” God’s children are not merely survivors in life’s school of hard knocks. In and through Christ, we triumph. No matter what our hurt is, we are more than conquerors through him who loves us.

Our text continues in Luke 1:8-13: “Now while he [Zechariah] was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.” **Gospel truth #2:** God was with Zechariah and Elizabeth in their hurt, and his ears heard their every prayer. “Your prayer has been heard,” the angel said (v. 13).

It is very likely that as priest on duty, Zechariah prayed for the Messiah to come, for the repentance and well-being of Israel, and for a child. Even when the days became weeks, months, years, and decades, Zechariah (and Elizabeth) continued to pray, to wait and to hope in