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Getting Past Fear and Doubt to Faith

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How would you respond if the miraculous invaded your life? That theoretical question became a reality for Zechariah--the father of John the Baptist. One day while he was carrying out his job as a priest, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared before him (Luke 1:5-25).

Frightened

How did Zechariah respond? He couldn't have been more frightened if a lion had entered the temple and licked its teeth and roared. But the angel didn't roar. Instead, he delivered a message so illogical and inconsistent with human experience that Zechariah doubted its truthfulness.

Too Old

The angel said Zechariah and his wife would have a son. It would have made more sense if the angel had said the priest and his wife would adopt a child. But he promised they would father and mother a son of their own. No wonder Zechariah doubted. After all, he and his wife were old. Too old to have kids.

Proof He Didn't Expect

Zechariah wanted to believe and so he asked for proof. And he got it. But not the kind he expected: the elderly priest would not speak until the birth of his son. Imagine seeing an angel who promised a miraculous birth and not being able to tell anyone. I suspect every time he wanted to speak and couldn't his faith grew. His forced silence erased his doubt. And when John was born, Zechariah opened his mouth wide and gave praise to God.

Fear, Doubt, Faith

What a progression: fear-doubt-faith. We've all known fear and doubt. And it's easy to get stuck there. For Zechariah, faith followed fear and doubt. And they can for us too. But, like Zechariah, we need to be receptive to truth. God probably won't take away your speech to prove his faithfulness. But he will give you all the evidence you need to believe.

Maybe you fear God has forgotten you. Perhaps a fear of financial or relational failure has caused you to doubt God's goodness. Or, maybe you doubt that God could ever change you or use you to change the world.

Silence Doesn't Mean Absence

Fear and doubt are natural. Faith is supernatural. That's why we all need to ask God to move us past fear and doubt into faith. The next time you're afraid, or doubting, talk to God. Ask him to strengthen your faith. And if he seems silent--remember Zechariah. Silence doesn't mean absence.