12/6/15 Dare to be Different

Luke 3:1-6 1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, 6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

Dare to be different

* Miraculous birth
  + Luke 1: 5-7 5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.  
    - Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous
    - Difficult to find a righteous priest in those days
    - Righteous before God= Walk blamelessly, followed commandments and statutes
      * Not perfect but did the best they could with what they had
    - One thing that didn't go good for them= NO CHILD
  + Zechariah was serving in the temple and went inside to burn incense an angel visited him and told him that his wife would give birth in a year and they were to name the boy John, Zechariah questioned in the angel (I'm old and my wife is advanced in years), mute until the birth of the child, Zechariah comes out of the temple= can't talk tries to signal and write they know that he has seen a vision
  + picking up in verse 24 After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, 25“Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”
  + John was different even before he was born
    - Mother barren
    - Both parents were old
      * Prayed for a child/specifically a son for many years
      * At this point because of the natural order of things probably given up on this dream
      * Just when we think our dream is over God does something miraculous
      * "in the game of life, nothing is less important than the score at halftime.  The tragedy of life is not that man loses, but that he almost wins." -The Traveler's Gift
    - Angel appeared to Zechariah
      * Give birth in a year
      * Wow prayers answered
      * Sign= Zechariah mute until Johns birth
    - Elizabeth conceived and hid for five months, took her reproach away  
      * Huge significance to be able to have a child
      * Fertility drugs/Adoption not an option

3 ways John the Baptist was different

1. Different in appearance
   * Matt. 3:4 and also in Mark 1:6 Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.
   * Wardrobe  
     + Camel's hair, leather belt
     + Wore Skin
     + Looked like a wild man=Cave man
   * long hair
     + Looks different than most people
     + Story of my first run in with someone who looked different at UGA=Jeff
   * Appearance of his countenance
     + Met people that something draws you to them
       - Countenance- can't really put it into words, but they appear different
     + Moses, Exodus 34: 29-35 29 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30 Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. 32 Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. 33 And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. 34 Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, 35 the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.
   * Moses countenance was different
     + Spent time with the Lord
     + Face to face
   * Holy Spirit is one reason John was different
     + The angel that visited Zechariah that foretold of John's birth said this in Luke 1:15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.
   * Ate Locusts and wild honey
     + Diet was different
     + People he was with and significant
     + There to show us John was different
2. Different in words
   * Later on in Ch. 3: 7-8 7 He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.
   * Scholars/Religious rulers
     + Pharisees/Sadducee's
     + Go to see- when we hear about something interesting- seeing is believing
     + John sees them and then tells them
     + John Calls them out
       - nobody in the Jewish society is doing that
       - Calls out their actions
   * Bold
     + Philippians 1:14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.
     + Paul knew about speaking boldly
   * What was John saying
     + Brood of Vipers= Sleek appearance/Deadly venom
       - Look good= suits ties in modern times
       - What was inside= Deadly
     + Don't rely on Traditions  
       - Abraham as father
       - Not about history/traditions
3. Different in actions
   * Baptism
     + Of repentance
     + Not what normally happened
   * 3:9-14  9 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” 10 And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?”11 And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” 13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.”14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”
   * Bear good fruit
     + Here in verse 8 and also in Matt. 3:8 it says Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.
     + In other words act differently, act changed, Act like you have repented
       - Repentance= turn 180 degrees
       - Turn from old ways
         * Tax collectors
         * Soldiers
     + How?
       - v. 10, two tunics share with he who has none, food=likewise  
         * Share= Learned at young age, always telling kids
         * Food Bank, Iserve, sponsoring a family
       - Tax collectors= don't take an excess
       - Soldiers don't extort money and be content with wages

What does this mean for us?

**We need to be different this Christmas**

1. Different in appearance
   * Dress
     + Season of tacky Christmas sweaters/ parties
       - Is that what it means?
     + Wear to church
       - Jeans/shorts vs. suits/dresses
       - Is that what we need to do?
   * Countenance
     + I want my face to shine like Moses
     + Spend time with the Father and your countenance will be changed
     + Spend time with Jesus
       - Know things are busy= Church/School/Family
2. Different in words
   * What are we talking about?, What are we saying?
     + This Christmas= deals?, shopping?, presents?
     + Christ
     + Seemed to be getting attacked= "Merry Christmas", Starbucks?
     + Don't care what others think
     + School teacher/ the one thing I'm willing to be fired over
       - "Can't talk about Jesus", etc.
       - Rule follower
       - Not going to be bible thumper/ Self-righteous/ Stir up strife
   * Bold
     + Doesn't mean rude/bible thumper/ Stir up strife
     + Stand up for Jesus
     + Speak truth with love "Love becomes soft if it is not strengthened by truth.  Truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love." -Nicky Gumbel
     + Can't be ashamed, but love has to be the point
3. Different in actions
   * Take care of the poor- share food/clothing= John
   * Don't cheat- John telling tax collectors and soldiers
   * Also means willing to be different- **BOLD**
     + praying for a stranger
       - Want us to
       - I am not comfortable with it/ You may think so
       - Step out of comfort of zone
     + Awkward/Weird
     + Talk to those normally wouldn't
       - Different=geology class
   * Bear fruit in keeping with Repentance
     + Repent
       - Sins- Known and Unknown
       - Turn away from my way of living
     + Galatians 5:22-23a 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,23 gentleness, self-control
       - That is the fruit we bear
       - Know we are Followers of Jesus by the fruit we bear

Closing

* Want us to be different this Christmas
* When people talk about Ebenezer, "Those people are different"
  + Appearance= Because they spend time with Jesus
  + Words= **Bold**, but bold with love, bold in faith
  + Do= What they do, pray with people that are not normally prayed for, help people that normally not helped