



## Leader Guide

# Zechariah and Elizabeth: An Answered Prayer

*December 3, 2023*

**Main Passage: Luke 1:5-25**

## Theological Theme

God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things that have a huge impact for His kingdom.

## Introduction

- ❓ What examples do you know of people who have been used by God in unexpected ways?
- ❓ When have you been surprised by something that God allowed you to be part of?

## 1. The Ordinary Couple (Luke 1:5-10)

The main characters of today's study were regular, ordinary people just like us. Zechariah was a priest, and his wife Elizabeth was a descendent of Aaron. They were good people who Scripture describes as righteous before God and blameless in His sight. These two were spiritual leaders in their community and had an excellent reputation, but they had one notable struggle that plagued them—they were unable to bear a child.

- ❓ Why is it important to remember that the people we read about in the Bible were regular people like us? What can happen if we fail to view them this way?
- ❓ What do we learn from this passage about doing things in the way God has prescribed, even if it's not the way we would naturally do them? What makes this hard in a season of expectation and waiting?
- ❓ Application: When have you been invited into a special moment with the Lord? How did you respond? What makes this exciting? What makes it fearful?

## 2. The Unusual Announcement (Luke 1:11-17)

God often shows up in the routine moments of life. As Zechariah was praying, he saw an angel of the Lord standing to the right of the altar of incense. That was an incredible and even scary moment. This angel was not the cute little cherub sitting on a cloud that many imagine today but was a strong, powerful, glorious being that struck fear into Zechariah's heart.

- ❓ Why might someone feel fear when confronted with the presence of God or an angel of the Lord? How does this compare to many modern ideas about God or His angels?
- ❓ What is a prayer you have given up on? How might God still be working in that situation? Why is He trustworthy no matter what?
- ❓ Application: Where do you need to ask the Holy Spirit to empower you as He did John to do His work in the world?

### 3. The Extraordinary Story (Luke 1:18-25)

Zechariah's head was likely spinning with the information from the angel battling with his hope and emotions that had been resurrected. He struggled to accept the incredible news and spoke honestly to the angel. Again, we are reminded that Zechariah was just a regular person like us. He felt the hope and joy from hearing the angel, but he was also painfully aware of he and Elizabeth's age. He asked the angel for reassurance as he weighed the word from the Lord with the circumstances he knew as reality for so long.

- ❓ When have you been tempted to doubt what God said because of your circumstances? How can you seek to grow in faith regarding what He has said over what you can see?
- ❓ When can it be helpful to not talk about something but instead to pray and think about it? Are there examples you know of this practice from Scripture? (See Luke 2:19.)
- ❓ Application: What does this text say to you about listening to God's plans and trusting Him even in unlikely circumstances?

### Conclusion

Throughout Scripture we see examples of ordinary people who lived extraordinary lives of great impact for the kingdom of God. These people vary from those who struggled to trust the Lord to those who consistently lived righteous lives. The common factor in every one of their stories was God. When God speaks and people listen, the extraordinary happens.

- ❓ How can you seek to live righteously before the Lord so that you might better hear Him?
- ❓ How do you need to be more like Zechariah and Elizabeth in listening to the Lord with obedience, even when it doesn't make sense? What circumstance is holding you back from trusting God?
- ❓ How might trusting God in this way give us opportunity for gospel conversations with others?