

25 Days of Advent

Seeing Jesus Through the Eyes of the Christmas Story Characters

ADVENT DAY 5: Dec. 5 – Elizabeth, the Mother of John the Baptist

Devotional

Imagine the delight and joy in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth! Not only would they become parents after decades of despair and disbelief, but they would parent the last of the Old Testament prophets and a forerunner of the Messiah. Can you imagine?

Elizabeth could have complained that God waited too long. She could have thought that it would be harder to raise a child. She could have decided that she no longer wanted a child. She could have even balked at the plans God had for her child's life.

But she didn't do any of those things. Rather, she turned and offered her praise back to God. She rejoiced over the blessing she was given and gave God the glory.

It's interesting to note that the first thing Mary did after finding out she would be carrying God's son was to go visit her cousin, Elizabeth. It's about a 100-mile journey from Nazareth to Elizabeth's house; Mary is not just scooting around the block to call on a relative. Luke tells us that she "hurried." Why? She just heard that Elizabeth was pregnant too. Given the fact that she was so unlikely to be pregnant by human standards, Mary may have thought Elizabeth would be the most likely to believe her situation – pregnant while still a virgin.

Mary needed someone to believe her, to rejoice with her, and to help her navigate the negative repercussions that were sure to come. She needed someone to help her figure out how to tell her fiancé that she was faithful, but pregnant. Elizabeth provided spiritual, physical, and emotional support to Mary. She took Mary into her care at a time when both women felt vulnerable and lonely, and the two were strengthened together. They rejoiced together in the "impossibility" that had become their reality.

Elizabeth's baby "leaped in her womb" when Mary entered the house and called a greeting. And the words she spoke to Mary when they met show that Elizabeth knew that Mary had a very important baby growing inside her, and that her baby would also have something to do with Mary's baby. Something she could only know because she, too, had been "filled with the Holy Spirit."

Elizabeth is known for being the mother of John the Baptist, the spirit-filled prophet like Elijah who will prepare the way for Jesus. But Elizabeth herself is described as being filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41).

In her book, *Advent*, Fleming Rutledge explains Elizabeth's joy:

Elizabeth's cry of supernatural joy has nothing to do with the ordinary human pleasure in contemplating the birth of a child. It is her response to that revelatory kick from John the Baptist, already vitalized by his destiny as "the prophet of the Most High" ... no phony innocence here, no sentimental glorification of motherhood, but the announcement of the turning point of world history – the entrance of God himself on the human scene.

The story of Elizabeth and Zechariah shows us that God can be trusted. His timing may not be the same as ours, but God will never lead us into something that He won't equip us for. He will not tell us to give away without supplying the means.

Look Up – Connect with God

Read: Luke 1:36-56

Key Verse: “Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me?” (Luke 1:43)

Pray: Lord, give me the faith of Elizabeth, to rejoice in your plans for me and my family and to faithfully walk in those plans no matter how difficult they may seem. Also, help me to see others around me who are in need of encouragement, mentoring, and support. May I reach out with your love in their time of need.

Look In – Family Memories

Discuss: Talk about these three important lessons to learn from the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah:

- Being barren is not a curse. The ultimate calling of a woman is not that of motherhood. There are many barren women in the Bible, and God always blesses them. Not always with a child, but He always blesses them. While children are a blessing, our ultimate calling is to bring glory and honor to God.
- God's timing is perfect. Elizabeth fully saw the hand of God in her life and rejoiced over His plan for her. Is there something in your life that makes you wonder what God is doing?
- You can trust God. This story builds our trust in God. When God proclaims something over our lives or we read something in the Bible, we need to trust Him.

Activity:

- Advent Tree: make or select an ornament of a mother dog and her pup or some other symbol of a mother/child and put it on the tree. Alternatively, you could put a picture of your kids and their cousins on a cardboard back and hang it on the tree. [Download Ornaments](#) or [Ornament Ideas](#)
- Advent Garland: put the key verse on a paper/card, assign #5, and attach it to the garland twine. [Key Verses](#)
- Advent Cards: select a card and see what the activity might be (i.e., visit someone in a nursing home or a neighbor who could use some company). [Family Activities](#)

Look Out – Connect with Others

Visit someone in a nursing home or a neighbor who could use some company. Bring a meal or treats to someone who's not feeling well or recovering from surgery. Be a neighbor!