



## Part 2: Doing Without the Sadness

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December 10 & 11, 2011

### **A Story of Faithfulness and Sadness:** *Luke 1:5-7*

<sup>5</sup> In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. <sup>6</sup> Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. <sup>7</sup> But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

**Zechariah means "The Lord is Faithful"**

**Elizabeth means "The Covenant or Oath"**

**Together their names mean "The Lord is Faithful to His Promise"**

**Most people think: Righteousness + Obedience = A Perfect Life**

**The Reality: Righteousness + Obedience = A Faithful Life**

**Tough truth: There is no formula for a miracle**

### **Luke 1:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John.

### **A Story of Faithfulness and Fear:** *Luke 1:26-38*

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

*(Continues on back)*

**Interesting side notes:** Same family, same angel, same questions, same skepticism, same promise, same miracle

Mary held to God's promise with trust and faith that God never fails.

### Luke 1:39-45

<sup>39</sup> At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! <sup>43</sup> But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

God sends the faithful and fearful one to the faithful and formerly sad one, and together they find unspeakable joy.

The joy of the Lord is found in his promise and his faithfulness.

The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.  
– Psalm 19:8

### Next Steps

**Fasting for the sake of spiritual breakthrough.** This week we encourage you to do without solid food for one day to focus your attention on praying for an unchurched or unbelieving person who you will invite to a Christmas Eve service.

**Christmas Eve Invitations:** For each specific person you plan to invite to Christmas Eve, pick up an invitation in the Commons today.

### Small Group Questions



- 1) What is your favorite Christmas movie? What is your favorite Christmas song?
- 2) What brings you unspeakable joy?
- 3) What is your opinion of the formulas that some people try to assign to miracles? What is your opinion about Grant's tough truth? Can you think of any scripture that would lead you to a different conclusion?
- 4) Who do you turn to (besides Jesus) when you are fearful or sad? Why do you go to that person in particular?
- 5) Is there a Christmas miracle you are praying for this year?
- 6) How can we pray for you today?