Hope Waits

When God Seems Silent

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November 29th, 2026

Luke 1:5-25 *(NIV)*
5 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. 6 Both of them were
righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. 7 But
they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.
8 Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, 9 he was
chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn
incense. 10 And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were
praying outside. 11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar
of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. 13 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. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will
rejoice because of his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or
other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. 16 He will bring
back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the
spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to
the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." 18 Zechariah asked the
angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." 19 The angel
said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and
to tell you this good news. 20 And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this
happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."
21 Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the
temple. 22 When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the
temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. 23 When his time of service
was completed, he returned home. 24 After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five
months remained in seclusion. 25 "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has
shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

- **Hope keeps praying when God seems silent.** *(vs. 5-17; Psalm 13; Colossians 4:2)*

"Zacharias had no idea that God would answer his two greatest prayers at once. He had probably completely given up on the idea of being a dad, but God hadn't given up on it." Guzik

- **Hope trusts God's timing and waits even when it seems too late.** *(vs. 18-20; Palm 130:5; Isaiah. 40:31)*

Don't look at your circumstances first, and what God can do last.
First look to what God can do.

- **Hope in God's promises produces joy.** *(vs. 21-25; Romans 15:13; Luke 1:57-64)*