

ADVENT

UNEXPECTED JOY

Luke 1:5 (NIV) “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.”

Luke 1:6 (NIV) “Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly.”

Luke 1:7 (NIV) “But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.”

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR DREAMS ARE DYING:

1. REMEMBER: God can answer your prayer any time.

Luke 1:8-9 (NIV) “Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.”

Luke 1:11-12 (NIV) “Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.”

Luke 1:13 (NIV) “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.’”

2. REMEMBER: God is listening even when He seems silent.

Luke 1:13_a (NIV) “But the angel said to him: ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard.’”

3. REMEMBER: God may seem slow but He is always on time.

Luke 1:13_b-15_a (NIV) “Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.”

John the Baptist Described

Luke 1:15_b (NIV) “He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.”

Luke 1:16-17 (NIV) “He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷And 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.”

4. REMEMBER: God does not take unbelief lightly.

Luke 1:18 (NIV) “Zechariah asked the angel, ‘How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.’”

Luke 1:19 (NIV) “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.’”

Luke 1:20 (NIV) “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.”

5. REMEMBER: To take joy in the miracles of other people.

Luke 1:57 (NIV) “When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son.”

Luke 1:58 (NIV) “Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and **they shared her joy.**”

6. REMEMBER: God's plan is always perfect.

Luke 1:67 (NIV) “John’s father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:”

Luke 1:76-77 (NIV) “And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, ⁷⁷to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins . . .”