

Series: Unlikely Heroes

ELIZABETH

LUKE 1:5-7, 38-45

Text:

Introduction:

There is only one person called Elizabeth in the Bible and her story is told in different stages by Luke.

He begins with her marriage to Zechariah the priest, then he describes her burden and blessing of being blessed with conception, he recounts the visit of Mary and then tells about the birth of John.

What makes the story of Elizabeth important is her commitment to the Lord.

Note:

1. HER BACKGROUND

Luke 1:5-7

⁵ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷ And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

Note three details about Elizabeth.

- Her Clan – Daughter of Aaron

This no doubt speaks of her faith and her care to preserve that faith in her life's companion.

- Her Companion – Priest named Zacharias

Zacharias was a priest that was a descendent of Aaron as well.

- Her Character

She had been married for a long time to Zechariah and Luke paints a beautiful picture of their life together when he says that they were 'both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and

statutes of the Lord.' Their marriage was marked by concord (harmony), comprehensive obedience of the Lord, and consistent obedience of his requirements.

They had a happy relationship with one another because they both put the Lord first in their individual lives and in their lives together.

They never left the Lord out of a decision and both of them were determined to do always what God required.

Elizabeth was a person with great character.

We would expect that such a couple would know God's blessing in many ways. No doubt, they did. Yet there was one feature that they had not known, and that was she had no children.

Note not only “Her Background” but also:

2. HER BURDEN REMOVED

Luke 1:24-25

²⁴ And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, ²⁵ Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

In these two verses, Luke records the response of Elizabeth to her unexpected conception. She chose to hide the fact that she was expecting a child. We might be surprised by her reaction and instead would have assumed that she would announce this blessing to the world. So why did she make this response?

I would suggest two possibilities:

- Her Humility

Elizabeth realized that this blessing gave her two choices. She could either draw attention to herself or not. She chose the latter.

Even although she had the promises about the child that the Gabriel had given to her husband, promises that were guaranteed, she still did not draw attention to herself. It is a humble person who chooses to act in such a manner.

Many blessings are lost because we become proud of having it.

Quote:

Spurgeon noted when speaking about Elizabeth, “Those who are most holy are most humble; you will always find those two things go together.”

Genuine Christians do not exalt themselves above their fellow-believers, but they have a humble spirit, and esteem others better than themselves.

Philippians 2:1-3

¹ If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ² Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Not only does her response show her humility but also:

- Her Honesty

All she had at the time was the prospect of delivering a child. She would have been aware of the dangers facing mothers at that time and location and of the many potential mishaps along the way.

Her response is a challenge to all the boasting that is linked to much contemporary Christianity.

Many professing Christians have made foolish claims about the onset of movements and congregations, and it has only taken the passing of a few months to show that nothing important happened.

Elizabeth was wise to wait. There would be plenty opportunities later for speaking about what had happened.

Meanwhile it was her role to keep quiet about the secret. After all, she did not want to become an attraction.

We can imagine the headlines: “Come and see a pregnant old woman who claims that her son will be a great preacher!”

Such a situation would take the glory away from God.

She preferred to hide herself until the time came when the only valid deduction would be to praise God.

Note not only “Her Background” and “Her Burden Removed” but also:

3. HER BLESSING

Luke 1:57-80

⁵⁷ Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. ⁵⁸ And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. ⁶⁰ And his

mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. ⁶¹ And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. ⁶² And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. ⁶⁴ And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God. ⁶⁵ And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. ⁶⁶ And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. ⁶⁷ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, ⁶⁸ Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, ⁶⁹ And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; ⁷⁰ As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: ⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; ⁷² To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; ⁷³ The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, ⁷⁴ That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. ⁷⁶ And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; ⁷⁷ To give knowledge of salvation

unto his people by the remission of their sins,
⁷⁸ Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the
dayspring from on high hath visited us, ⁷⁹ To give light
to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of
death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. ⁸⁰ And
the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in
the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Close:

I close with two applications:

1. We never know what great things God has in store for us.

We shouldn't get bitter over what we feel that God has withheld from us but enjoy the people, and things that God has given us.

The leads to the second principle:

2. The Lord must be central in of life.

We must understand that God's way is perfect.

Psalm 18:30

³⁰ *As for* God, his way *is* perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he *is* a buckler to all those that trust in him.