

# 5 Day Devotional

## Day 1: When Hope Feels Distant

### Devotional

Have you ever felt like you're living in perpetual winter, where the light at the end of the tunnel seems to have been turned off? Zechariah and Elizabeth knew this feeling intimately. For 35 years, they watched other families grow while their arms remained empty. In their culture, childlessness wasn't just a personal disappointment—it carried the weight of perceived divine displeasure and community judgment.

Yet Scripture describes them as "upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly." Their faithfulness wasn't dependent on their circumstances. They continued serving God even when His plan didn't align with their deepest desires.

Perhaps you're in a season where your hopes have turned to disappointment, and disappointment has settled into despair. Maybe you've even reached that place of reluctant acceptance. But here's what Zechariah and Elizabeth's story teaches us: God's timing is not our timing, and His silence doesn't mean His absence.

Their story reminds us that even in the darkest seasons, when Caesar's cruelty seems to reign and hope feels foolish, God is still writing a beautiful story. Sometimes the most profound preparations happen in the waiting rooms of life, where character is refined and faith is deepened.

Don't give up on the dreams God has placed in your heart. The same God who remembered Elizabeth in her old age remembers you in your waiting. Your winter season may be preparing you for a spring you can't yet imagine.

### Bible Verse

"Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old." - Luke 1:6-7

### Reflection Question

What dreams or hopes in your life have moved from expectation to disappointment, and how might God be using this waiting season to prepare you for something greater?

### Quote

Perhaps you have hopes and dreams and they don't come true. Well, think about Zechariah and Elizabeth. Those hopes perhaps turned into disappointment, disappointment into despair and perhaps finally acceptance.

### Prayer

Lord, when hope feels distant and my dreams seem impossible, help me to trust in Your perfect timing. Give me the strength to remain faithful like Zechariah and Elizabeth, even when I can't see Your plan unfolding. Remind me that Your silence doesn't mean Your absence, and that You are always working behind the scenes for my good. Amen.

## Day 2: Don't Give Up - He's Got a Plan

### Devotional

Imagine Zechariah's shock when the angel Gabriel appeared in the holy place with news that seemed impossible: Elizabeth would bear a son. After decades of silence from heaven regarding their deepest longing, God chose the most unexpected moment to intervene. Zechariah was chosen by lottery for the rare honor of burning incense—a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that became the stage for a divine encounter.

God's plans often unfold when we least expect them. Just when Zechariah and Elizabeth had probably settled into acceptance of their childless state, heaven broke through with a message that would change everything. The angel didn't just promise a child; he promised a child with a specific purpose—to prepare the way for the Messiah.

This teaches us something profound about God's character: He doesn't waste our waiting. Every year of longing, every tear shed in private, every moment of wondering "why me?" was being woven into a larger tapestry of redemption. Their son John would become the forerunner to Jesus, the voice crying in the wilderness.

When you're tempted to give up on God's promises, remember that He specializes in impossible situations. The same God who gave a child to a barren woman in her old age is the God who holds your future. Your current chapter isn't the end of your story—it might just be the setup for the most beautiful plot twist you could never have imagined.

God is a God of hope who says, "Get on your tiptoes." Keep watching, keep believing, keep trusting. He's got a plan.

### **Bible Verse**

"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. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth.'" - Luke 1:13-14

### **Reflection Question**

In what areas of your life do you need to "get on your tiptoes" and trust that God has a plan, even when His timing doesn't match your expectations?

### **Quote**

Maybe you are there this morning Hear God's word, Don't give up. He's got a plan.

### **Prayer**

Father, help me to trust that You have a plan even when I can't see it. When I'm tempted to give up on Your promises, remind me of Zechariah and Elizabeth's story. Give me the faith to believe that You specialize in impossible situations and that my waiting is not wasted. Help me to get on my tiptoes with expectation for what You will do. Amen.

## **Day 3: Living in the Story God Tells**

### **Devotional**

After the angel's visit, Zechariah experienced nine months of silence—unable to speak until John's birth. But what if that year of waiting, knowing the end of the story, was one of the best years of his life? God had told him what would happen, and now he could live in the certainty of that promise, even before seeing its fulfillment.

When Zechariah's voice finally returned, he burst into the Benedictus, a song of praise that reveals something remarkable about biblical hope. Notice his language: "He has come to his people and redeemed them." Not "He will come," but "He has come." Christ hadn't been born yet, but Zechariah was so certain of God's promise that he spoke as if it were already accomplished.

This is what it means to live in the story God tells rather than the story our circumstances suggest. Hope isn't just wishful thinking or positive attitude—it's living with such confidence in God's promises that we speak and act as if they're already true. It's leaning so far into God's faithfulness that our present reality is shaped by His future promises.

In our busy seasons, we need to be still and allow God's story to seep into our souls. When we do, we begin to see our current chapter through the lens of His eternal narrative. We start living not just in what is, but in what God has promised will be.

What story is God telling in your life? Are you living in the limitations of your current circumstances, or are you leaning into the hope of His promises with such certainty that it changes how you walk through today?

### **Bible Verse**

"His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: 'Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.'" - Luke 1:67-68

### **Reflection Question**

How can you begin living today as if God's promises for your future are already accomplished, and what would change in your daily perspective if you truly believed His story over your circumstances?

### **Quote**

I wonder if that year of waiting for their son to be born was one of the best years of Zechariah's life. Because God had told him the story. He knew the end of that story.

### **Prayer**

Holy Spirit, fill me with the same confidence that filled Zechariah. Help me to live in the story You are telling rather than being limited by my current circumstances. Give me faith to speak and act as if Your promises are already accomplished, because I know You are faithful to complete what You have begun. Let Your story seep into my soul and transform how I see today. Amen.

## **Day 4: Choosing Joy Over Fear**

### **Devotional**

When John was born, Zechariah proclaimed that Christ would be "our horn of salvation" who came to "rescue us from the hand of our enemies so that we might serve him without fear." This wasn't just about political freedom—it was about liberation from the fears that rob us of joy and keep us from living freely in Christ.

Fear is one of the biggest joy killers we face. Fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of not being accepted, even fear of death itself. These fears become bullies that hold us back from experiencing the abundant life Christ offers. But Jesus came with the power to destroy death and kick the hell out of death, freeing us to serve without the paralyzing grip of fear.

Joy isn't just an emotion that happens to us—it's a choice we make. It's a fruit of the Spirit, but we still must decide to cultivate it. We can walk around focusing on the bad news of the day, holding our heads down and lamenting the darkness of our world. Or we can choose the joy of the Lord, which is our strength.

The serious business of heaven is joy. God is a God of joy who longs to infuse you with overflowing joy that others can see. This doesn't mean ignoring real problems or pretending everything is perfect. It means choosing to focus on God's faithfulness and the salvation He has provided rather than being dominated by fear.

What fears are bullying you today? What anxieties are stealing your joy and keeping you from serving God freely? Bring them to Him. He has the power to deliver you and fill you with His joy.

### **Bible Verse**

"To rescue us from the hand of our enemies so that we might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days." - Luke 1:74-75

### **Reflection Question**

What specific fears are acting as bullies in your life, holding you back from living freely and joyfully in Christ, and how can you bring these to God today?

### **Quote**

One of the big joy killers that I see in my own life is that thing of fear, the fear of failure, the fear you won't be accepted, the fear of even death itself.

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, You came as our horn of salvation to free us from fear. I bring to You the fears that bully me and steal my joy—fear of failure, rejection, and uncertainty. Help me to choose joy over fear, knowing that You have the power to deliver me. Fill me with Your overflowing joy that others can see, and help me to serve You without fear. Let Your joy be my strength today. Amen.

## **Day 5: The Gift We All Need**

### **Devotional**

John the Baptist had one message that cut through all social barriers and pretenses: "Repent, turn to Jesus." Whether someone lived on the wrong side of the tracks with a life that smelled like stale beer, or resided in a gated community with all the material possessions they thought they needed, John's message was the same. The need is universal.

This is the beautiful truth of Christmas: young or old, rich or poor, the need is the same, and the gift is for everyone. We all need a Savior. No amount of success, wealth, or social status can fill the God-shaped hole in our hearts. No amount of failure, poverty, or past mistakes can disqualify us from receiving God's gift of salvation.

John's ministry was about preparing hearts to receive this gift. He called people to recognize their need and turn toward the One who could meet it. His message wasn't popular or comfortable, but it was necessary. Sometimes the most loving thing we can do is help people see their need for Jesus.

As we reflect on Zechariah and Elizabeth's journey—from barrenness to blessing, from silence to song, from waiting to witnessing—we see that God's greatest gift isn't just answered prayers or fulfilled dreams. His greatest gift is Jesus Himself, the salvation that brings true joy, the hope that doesn't disappoint, and the love that casts out fear.

This Christmas season, remember that the gift of salvation and joy is available to everyone. No matter where you've been or what you've done, God's gift is for you. And once you've received it, like Zechariah, you'll have a song to sing.

### **Bible Verse**

"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, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins." - Luke 1:76-77

### **Reflection Question**

How has receiving God's gift of salvation changed your life, and how can you help others recognize their need for this same gift that's available to everyone?

### **Quote**

Young or old, rich or poor, the need is the same. And that gift is for us. The gift of salvation, the gift of joy.

### **Prayer**

Father, thank You for the gift of salvation that is available to everyone, regardless of background or circumstances. Help me to never forget my need for Jesus and to live with gratitude for Your amazing grace. Use me to help others recognize their need for You and to share the joy that comes from knowing Christ. May my life be a song of praise like Zechariah's, pointing others to the Savior we all need. Amen.