

**Good News comes at Unexpected Times, from Unexpected People, In Unexpected Ways**  
**Luke 1**  
**Sunday, December 15, 2019**

**Cast:**

<b>Narrator</b>	<b>Person 1</b>
<b>Zechariah</b>	<b>Person 2</b>
<b>Elizabeth</b>	<b>Person 3</b>
<b>Gabriel</b>	<b>John the Baptist</b>

**Good news doesn't always look the way we think it's supposed to look.**

**Good news comes in surprising ways.**

**Good news comes through unexpected events.**

**Things that seem odd or even bad at first can actually be very good news!**

**As we take part in the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth (parents of John the Baptist), we will see that God's good news comes at unexpected times, to unexpected people, in unexpected ways.**

N: In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah

Z: Hello, there!

N: Who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah;  
his wife Elizabeth

E: ***(Pops out)*** Hello!

N: was also a descendant of Aaron.

Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly.

***(Z and E awkwardly high 5 each other)***

N: But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

Z: Woooooooooooooooooah!

E: Very old? Easy now!

N: ***(apologetic, but matter of fact)*** I'm sorry, I'm just reading what the Bible has to say about you.

Z: Well if it's in the Bible . . . *(shrugs)*

***(Z goes toward temple, Elizabeth behind tent)***

N: Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ***(Z goes to table between pillars, carrying bowls for incense)***. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

***(People leave pew and walk up to 2<sup>nd</sup> last step, knell and bow heads in prayer.)***

N: Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ***(Angel appears.)***

G: ***(Enthusiastically)*** "Hi!"

***(Zechariah spooked! BIG reaction!)***

N: When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.

Z: I think we've already established that!

N: But the angel said to him:

G: 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, 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. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 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.

N: Zechariah asked the angel,

Z: How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

***(Long awkward pause. Gabriel incredulous.)***

G: Are you kidding me right now?

Z: What? Elizabeth and I are old. How will this happen?

G: Seriously. I'm right HERE. And you are asking THAT.

Z: Seems like a fair question

N: The angel said to him,

G: ***(With claps)*** I. am. Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to YOU ***(points into his chest with emphasis)*** and to tell you this. Good. News.

Z: Ohhhh. Gotcha. Seeing an angel should have been enough. I should have believed because of the angelic messenger.

G: 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.

***(Gabriel pulls out big remote, and presses mute)***

***(Awkward pause.)***

G: ***(To audience.)*** Oh, I hit the mute button. Right here. On this remote. So now he can't speak anymore.

N: ***(crowd gathers in front of microphones)*** Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them.

***(Zechariah make huge but clear dramatic signs - Charades type explanations. People stand up and stand behind microphone stands. People murmuring and can't understand. The people speak over top of each other.)***

***P1: "why isn't he saying anything?"***

***P2: "What's wrong with him?"***

***P3: "Zechariah, say something, anything!"***

***(Z thinks for a long time, has an IDEA(!), then flaps arms.)***

P1: A Dove!

P2: A duck

***(Z shakes head. Pauses. Points to ear – sounds like – makes an angle with two index fingers)***

P3: Sounds like angle.

P2: Angel!

***(Zechariah nods and keeps going – pretends to rip something away from someone.)***

P1: Steal!

P2: Took!

***(Z nods again – points to self)***

P3: My

***(Z makes talky hands)***

P2: Speak

P1: Talk

***(Z points to throat)***

P2: Voice!

P3: Angel took my voice!

P1 P2 P3: ***YEAH! (High five each other. P1 does the Floss. P2 does a Dab. P3 does Hype. Zechariah flustered. The people notice then calm down.)***

N: They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

When his time of service was completed, he returned home.

P2: WAIT! He kept working!?!?!?

***(Zechariah shrugs and nods)***

N: It was his job. Zechariah was faithful to God, and faithful to serve and worship God. It's who he was. It describes the faithfulness of him and Elizabeth both very, very well.

When his time of service was completed, he returned home, still unable to speak.

***(Zechariah walks behind tent, people return to the front pew.)***

E: Those were the happiest months of our marriage. Have you ever been married to a high priest. Or worse: a pastor? “blah blah blah” ***(PAUSE)*** I kid! I kid! Zechariah has always been so wise. As a priest he had to be. These months of silence were unsettling. They were confusing. But they made us rely on God. They prepared us for this great task of raising a prophet. Of raising someone who had to hear and share the words of God. These quiet months helped us deeply trust in God with all of our heart and soul and mind and strength.

N: After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion.

E: The Lord has done this for me. In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.

This news brought home by my muted husband was a source of great joy for me. We never imagined something like this would happen. We never asked for this – not recently anyway. So this unexpected news brought me unspeakable joy.

N: When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. **(Angel Gabriel rushes onstage with a baby, hands it to Elizabeth, gives big thumbs up to the audience, then leaves quickly. Elizabeth holds up John baby Lion King style before holding it normally.)** Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

**(Same crowd from the temple joins E and Z and J at their house.)**

N: On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said,

E: No! He is to be called John.

N: They said to her,

P1: There is no one among your relatives who has that name.

N: Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, **(walks to massive white board)** and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." **(Writes on board)** Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God.

Z: Praise God! I can speak!

N: Upon hearing Zechariah speak all the neighbors were filled with awe **(people do the Home Alone surprised face)**, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking,

P2: What then is this child going to be?

N: For the Lord's hand was with him.

**(Zechariah's steps forward to deliver these words.)**

N: His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

Z: "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
 because he has come to his people and redeemed them.  
 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
 in the house of his servant David  
 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),  
 salvation from our enemies  
 and from the hand of all who hate us—  
 to show mercy to our ancestors  
 and to remember his holy covenant,  
 the oath he swore to our father Abraham:  
 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,  
 and to enable us to serve him without fear  
 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

***Zechariah steps back and takes John from Elizabeth. He speak these words directly to John.***

Z: 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,  
 because of the tender mercy of our God,  
 by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven  
 to shine on those living in darkness  
 and in the shadow of death,  
 to guide our feet into the path of peace.

***(Everyone leave the stage.)***

N: And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

**Good news came at an unexpected time to unexpected people: a married couple when they were very old.**

**The good news came in an unexpected way: through an angel, through an old man with a lost voice, through the pregnancy of senior citizens!**

**The baby becomes a great prophet: John the Baptizer. He, too, delivered good news. But his good news came in an unexpected way, too.**

N: ***( Adult John appears from backstage in camel skins etc)*** And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

**He's delivering good news in the wilderness, wearing camel's hair, and living on locust and wild honey. What an unexpected way for God to deliver the good news.**

**Oh! And his good news sounded like this:**

J: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire

**Does that sound like good news to you?**

**Good news doesn't always look the way you think it should.**

**John the Baptizer, from his birth through to his wilderness ministry, was preparing the way for Jesus!**

J: After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

***(John the B heads back from whence he came.)***

**Jesus was the good news that John was preparing people for. "Make your hearts right with God! Prepare yourself for Jesus the King!"**

**The good news of Jesus always seems to come at unexpected times, from unexpected people, in unexpected ways.**

**Are you seeing? Are you listening? Are you ready?**