



Mustard Seed Children's Summary for December 14, 2008
Released on Wednesday, December 10, 2008

"Elisabeth's Faith in God"

DEVOTIONAL READING: Isaiah 7:10-14.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:5-24, 39-45.

MEMORY VERSE: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb"
(Luke 1:42)

Luke 1:39-45

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah;

40 And entered into the house of Zechariah [Zacharias], and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

To teach that believing God and saying yes to His way is the best, because His plans are good.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. Elisabeth believed that God was using Mary to bring His Son into the world.
2. Elisabeth was happy even when God chose someone else to be the Saviour's mother.
3. God's good way of doing things resulted in bringing a Saviour to the world.

PLANNING LESSON AIDS:

For Beginning the Lesson, find a picture to represent Elisabeth.

For Telling the Lesson, you will need pictures of a baby, an angel, and Mary.

For Telling How to Live, print a large "YOU" on a half sheet of colored construction paper.

For Helping to Remember, for each child cut a sheet of colored construction paper in half lengthwise. Take crayons and a supply of gummed stars. Make a sample.

For the Lesson Activity, make a copy for each child.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Time: 6 or 5 B. C.

Place: hill country of Judea

As we continue this quarter's focus on the commitment of individuals to God's will, we turn our attention to Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Elisabeth was married to Zacharias (Zechariah) who was a priest, and she was a cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both Elisabeth and Zacharias were of priestly descent, and they served God faithfully (Luke 1:6). The Scripture indicates that both were "stricken in years" (1:7) or advanced in years (old), they had no children, and it was highly unlikely that they would ever have a child because of their age.

Jewish women regarded childlessness as a severe reproach or humiliation. Perhaps many women of this time dreamed of being the mother to the promised Messiah. It was into this climate that the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias with the news that he and his wife would bear a son in their old age. This son would not be the Messiah but would prepare the way for His coming.

Elisabeth miraculously conceived and expressed in faith how God had "looked on" her and taken away her reproach (1:25). Six months later, the angel Gabriel again appears – this time to a young relative of Elisabeth, Mary, and announces that she will be the mother of the Savior of the world. Soon after this, Mary visits Elisabeth, and we again see Elisabeth's faith in God as her Spirit-filled greeting of Mary demonstrates her joy that God was carrying out His promise of redemption by sending the Messiah.

TEACHER'S NOTES:

The Bible often teaches by example. Many stories show men and women modeling faith and obedience. Those stories say to us, "Do it this way." Other accounts show people choosing their own way rather than God's way and reaping the unhappy consequences of their poor choices. Their message is a clear "Unwise choice. Avoid taking this path." This week's lesson holds up both Elisabeth and Mary as examples of two who happily chose the first option. Primarily the lesson will follow Elisabeth.

When Elisabeth was far too old to bear children, an angel came to her husband, Zacharias, bringing the news that she would indeed have a son. In spite of her advanced years and the "impossibility" of such a thing happening, God had chosen Elisabeth for the special task of bringing Messiah's forerunner into the world. In God's good plan, this miracle baby would grow up to be a herald, readying people to receive Jesus when He appeared.

Elisabeth's faith and happy acceptance of God's entire plan became apparent when Mary came to visit.

In those days not all "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38), but some still did. Of that number, any woman would have felt highly honored if God were to choose her to be Messiah's mother, so we can understand why Elisabeth greeted Mary as she did: "Blessed art thou among women" (1:42). No jealousy was manifested. Elisabeth recognized that she had not been the one chosen, but she registered nothing but joy that the Lord was carrying out His plan, even if through another.

Elisabeth's joy was based on her faith and her obedient spirit. She believed God's promises, and she believed that His way of carrying out those promises would be good, no matter whom He chose to use. She chose to comply.

The old song had it right. To trust and obey is the best, the happiest, the fruitful way to go. Will young children fully understand what this implies for the years that lie ahead of them? No, but how long did it take *us* to learn the little we know about our heavenly Father's total reliability and the goodness of His plans? Again, as with many other lessons, we are seed planting.

We are planting the seed that God is good and that what He has in mind for us and for others to do is something good. We are planting the seed that our obeying somehow opens the door for Him to put that "something good" in motion. We are planting the seed that God always does it right.

Let us plant the seed that, yes, God's way of doing things *is* far better than our own.

BEGINNING THE LESSON:

Bible stories tell about many different people. We know they talk a lot about Jesus. They tell about Moses and Noah. Whom else does the Bible talk about? (Accept answers.) We can read about Peter and John and all those other people you thought of. Yes, Paul is spoken of often. Yes, these were all important. But nobody mentioned Elisabeth. (Or, I am especially glad someone thought about Elisabeth.)

The Bible does not say much about Elisabeth, but what it does say is interesting. (Show Elisabeth.) In today's lesson, Elisabeth did two very important things. Let us find out what those important things were.

TELLING THE LESSON:

One thing the Bible does tell us about Elisabeth is that she was a very old woman. Her husband, Zacharias, was old too.

The Bible also tells us that there was something Zacharias and Elisabeth had wanted for a long time. They wanted a baby. (Show baby.) You see, Elisabeth had never had a baby. Now she was too old to have one, and *that* is the part of Elisabeth's story that is extra important because of what happened.

One day an angel from God came to Zacharias and told him Elisabeth *would* have a baby. (Show angel.) It did not matter that she was too old. God would make it happen anyway. Nothing is too hard for God to do.

The angel told Zacharias that God would have some special work for Elisabeth's baby to do when he grew to be a man. Her grown-up baby would get people ready for Jesus to come.

The angel went home to heaven then, but after a little while he came back. (Show angel.) This time God sent him to Mary's house. He told her that *she* was going to be a mother too and that her baby would be God's own Son. Mary just did not understand how that could be. (Show Mary.)

But the angel explained to her God would do it. "Your relative Elisabeth will soon be a mother too," he said, "even though she is far too old to have a baby. God is going to make it happen anyway. You see, nothing is too hard for Him to do."

Now Mary did believe God could do wonderful things. Besides, she knew that His way of doing things was always right, so she said yes. It was a happy yes, for she really wanted the Lord to use her just the way He wanted to.

When the angel went back to heaven, Mary began thinking. She decided she would go see her relative Elisabeth. She wanted to tell Elisabeth about the angel and what he had said. She wanted Elisabeth to know about the wonderful thing God was going to do.

So Mary got ready for her trip. (Show Mary.) It was a long trip, up and down and over many hills. Maybe Mary rode a donkey. The Bible does not say, but we know that at last she saw Elisabeth's town. And then she saw Elisabeth's house. She walked up to the door and called hello to Elisabeth. (Show Elisabeth.)

Now, somehow God—who can do anything —had let Elisabeth know He had chosen Mary to be the mother of His Son. So as soon as Elisabeth heard Mary's voice, she did not even say hello. Instead, she said in a loud voice, "Oh, you are the most special of all the women in the world, and most special is your baby! What good thing have I ever done that my Lord's mother would visit *me*?"

You can tell that Elisabeth believed what God had shown her about Mary and who Mary's baby would be. People in those long-ago days knew what God had promised. Someday He was going to send a very special Somebody into the world. Many women were hoping God would choose them to be the mother of that special One.

Elisabeth knew now that God had not chosen her. He had chosen Mary. (Show Mary.) Still, Elisabeth did not mind that He had chosen someone else. She could be glad anyway because she believed God's way of doing things was the best way. What Elisabeth said to Mary was her way of saying a happy yes to God's way.

Of course, the Lord's way was best. He wanted Jesus to have a mother who believed God and would do what He said. He knew Mary would be that kind of mother. But the Lord

wanted somebody else too. He needed another woman who also believed Him and wanted His way. He wanted her to be the mother of a boy who would grow up and get people ready for Jesus to come. Elisabeth was that lady.

Mary believed God, and Elisabeth did too. Both of them said a happy yes to what He wanted them to do. (Show Elisabeth and Mary.) Think of the good thing that happened because they did. Jesus came, and we have a Saviour to take away our sins.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

Boys and girls, the Bible says that when *you* obey God, He makes good things happen too. (Show "YOU.") What He wants you to do is always best.

Can we decide right now to be like Elisabeth and Mary? Let us decide that we shall always say a happy yes to God and His way. Let us always try to do just what He says.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Show the class the sample handwork you have made. In the center is a large "YES" printed in capitals and outlined with gummed stars. On one side you have drawn Elisabeth and Mary. On the other side you have drawn yourself. Tell the children that drawing themselves says that they want to go God's way too.

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE:

"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Luke 1:42)

This is what Elisabeth said to Mary, the mother of Jesus. There are some old words in this verse that we do not use anymore. "Art" just means "are." "Thou" means "you." "Thy" means "your." And "fruit of thy womb" is a fancy way of talking about Mary's baby.

What Elisabeth was saying was, "Mary, out of all the women in the world, God has made you the most special. Your baby is the most special of all, and that is happy, happy news!

CONCLUSION:

A very important message for us to learn is that God's way is always the best way. We must trust God and obey Him. When we commit to God's will, great things happen for us.

Elisabeth and Mary are examples of what can happen if we have faith in God and trust His plans for our lives. These women were committed to God, and we see this in the way they responded to the messages from God. We can follow their examples. We can have faith in God and praise Him for His plans for our lives.

PRAYER:

Father God, thank you for the examples that you give us in Your Word. Help us to be like Elisabeth and Mary and have faith in Your plans for us. Help us to trust and say "yes" to Your way, in Jesus' name, amen.

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Especially at Christmastime, we are reminded of how the shepherds received the glorious news of the birth of the Savior. Next week's lesson is **"The Shepherds' Good News"** and tells the key role the shepherds played in that first Christmas. Study Luke 2:1-20.

Lesson Summarized by:

Renee Little
Jesus Is All Ministries
www.jesusisall.com

LESSON ACTIVITY:

Elisabeth's Faith in God (Luke 1:5-45)

Use the words below to fill in the blanks in the story. Find the same words in the word search.

faith
cousin
Elisabeth

angel
ready
baby

Mary
Holy Ghost
John

visit
prayers
believed

old
Jesus
Gabriel

blessed
leaped
Zacharias

_____ and her husband _____ wanted to have a baby, but they were too old. One day an angel from God, named _____, told Zacharias that his _____ had been answered. It did not matter that they were too _____, they would have a _____ and name him _____. Their baby would grow up and have special work to do helping people get _____ for Jesus to come.

A little while later, the _____ also visited Elisabeth's _____, Mary. The angel told _____ that she would have a son also. Mary's son would be named _____. The angel also told Mary that Elisabeth would soon be a mother also. Mary hurried and went to _____ Elisabeth.

Elisabeth was excited that Mary had come to visit. When she heard Mary's voice, her baby _____ inside of her, and she was filled with the _____. Elisabeth told Mary that she was the most _____ of all women. Both Elisabeth and Mary were blessed because they _____ and had _____ in God.

A S E G E B Y T E B O B E H D T I A E I U B H
D Z B Y V B L E S S E D L R T G B L R I S I G
A Y H A E A I S A B L L P D Z E A F S E B R S
H A O S I I T R E A D Y I R H R B B E I I B J
Y T D L O L D F O A R Y I E A T R A R P Y O Y
L D G E I O T C D O J R C L V Y D E S I A L H
I B L G P A I B E A L A O S H E E O A I E E D
E U O N S F H I I Y H M U C J S D R H S L L T
H O E A L A F A I T H S S T I S I V S G S E D
E J L E A P E D A H E E I B I B I A D A V E S
A T N A O I I D S J L I N E I M H E P D E E A
U E G H H A E S H O L Y G H O S T J S G O H S
L R Z J O B R E P E T S R B O I B B D I C B Z
R B L Y E J S L N C E S A I R A H C A Z E A E
E A E C D H G Y B A B N E Y L E R E L L E S L
I R S S L S O Y T J A A A I E S D C L I B H E

Answer Key to "Elisabeth's Faith in God" (Luke 1:5-45)

Elisabeth and her husband Zacharias wanted to have a baby, but they were too old. One day an angel from God, named Gabriel, told Zacharias that his prayers had been answered. It did not matter that they were too old, they would have a baby and name him John. Their baby would grow up and have special work to do helping people get ready for Jesus to come.

A little while later, the angel also visited Elisabeth's cousin, Mary. The angel told Mary that she would have a son also. Mary's son would be named Jesus. The angel also told Mary that Elisabeth would soon be a mother also. Mary hurried and went to visit Elisabeth. Elisabeth was excited that Mary had come to visit. When she heard Mary's voice, her baby leaped inside of her, and she was filled with the Holy Ghost. Elisabeth told Mary that she was the most blessed of all women. Both Elisabeth and Mary were blessed because they believed and had faith in God.

B H
B L E S S E D T G
L P E A
R E A D Y I R B B
L O L D Y E A A R
E R C V Y S I
G A O S E E I E
N M U D R L L
A F A I T H S S T I S I V S E
L E A P E D E I
N J N
H H O L Y G H O S T
O
J S A I R A H C A Z
Y B A B