

Nine Months with Christ in the Womb

Elizabeth's Burden

Relevant Scripture: Luke 1: 5-17

Old Elizabeth's burden was a quiet one. She always carried herself with a confidence and dignity that was fitting to the wife of a high priest. She had been beautiful as a young woman and even more so as she reached the late years of life. Zechariah always referred to her as the greatest joy in his life, and he meant it no doubt. He knew these things were complicated and never blamed her in the least. Still, she would wrongly blame herself. When she would find herself alone in their home, her pain would often strike her as sharp as a knife. Even now, as her friends celebrated grandchildren, the pain of her barrenness could be so intense as to leave her teary-eyed and breathless at times.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were truly pillars in their community. Likewise, they had worked hard to nurture an environment of deep love, commitment, and kindness in their home. Why had the Lord not blessed them with just one son or daughter upon which to shower so much love? And if that could not be an option, why could He not at least let the desire of her heart begin to wane? Why could this piercing not be softened by the many other blessings in her life?

Of course, Elizabeth knew well the derision with which the younger mothers sometimes spoke of her. She could see behind the silly facades of women half her age who thought they were too superior to even associate with a *barren woman*. These did not bother her. There was even something comical about their absurdity. No, what hurt the most was her knowledge that children were being born in every corner of the world. Many were even being neglected or abandoned. Yet, she and her dear husband were being denied this most basic of human longings, the desire for a child of their own to love and raise according to the law of Moses.

Then, that strange morning came when Zechariah lost his voice. She would have thought he might be distraught to lose something so important to his daily life. Yet, he seemed completely unconcerned, almost joyful. What did he know? What secret was it that he could no longer share with her? Weeks later, she felt something strange inside her, a bubbliness or a tickle. She knew it was madness. She knew it was impossible, and yet somehow, she also knew beyond any shadow of doubt that the Lord had finally blessed them. She chuckled to herself. Old Elizabeth was finally going to be a mother!

Over the next month please pray especially for all those couples who struggle with the heavy burden of infertility. May Christ free them from their grief while also leading them to fertility practices fully in line with their own dignity and the dignity of their potential offspring.

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