

Expecting the Unexpected Christmas 2020

Pastor Tim Allen

Key Truth: At Christmastime we are reminded that faith in God enables us to expect the unexpected, joyfully.

When we think of the miraculous concepts of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, and consider the miracles surrounding their births, we might be surprised by God's grace. Yet, if there's anything Christmas teaches us, it's that we should expect the unexpected. Of course, nothing takes God by surprise; He'd been planning the Incarnation for ages past. Nevertheless, we should not be surprised that God would act in the same gracious manner that characterizes his nature.

DISCUSS

Read Luke 1:5-25 and discuss with the group a statement or concept that stood out to you or impacted you in the sermon on **Expecting the Unexpected**.

DIG IN

1. An Unexpected Opportunity. (vv. 5-10)

From verses 5-7, describe Zechariah and Elizabeth. Why is this description important?

Review 1 Chronicles 24:1-19, to understand the background of Zechariah's place in the division of the priesthood. Why would it have been significant for Zechariah to be chosen to offer incense on the altar in the Holy Place?

2. An Unexpected Visit. (vv. 11-13)

When Zechariah saw the angel, he was filled with fear. What did the angel say to encourage Zechariah (v. 13)?

The name, *John* (v. 13), means "the Lord is gracious." In what ways does a recognition of God's graciousness encourage us when facing unexpected challenges?

3. Unexpected Joy. (vv. 14-25)

Read vv. 15-17: Describe the role Zechariah's son would play in the gospel and salvation history. Why should this be cause for rejoicing (see vv. 14 and 19)?

What was Zechariah's reaction to the angel's news? Why do you think he reacted that way? Do you think you'd react the same way? Why or why not?

From what you read in verse 19, why do you think it is significant that Zechariah lost his ability to speak for a time (see v. 20)?

DO

In what practical ways might you exercise faith this week in God's graciousness as you handle "unexpected" challenges?