

# The Life Challenge

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10*

**Series:** Christmas in Perspective  
**Title:** Surprised by God's Gracious Gift  
**Text:** Luke 1:5-25; 57-59  
**Speaker:** Steve & Karen Berg  
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## WARM-UP

Tell the story of a person that you know who seems to be steady, faithful, positive, trusting God through all of life's ups and downs. What life wisdom could you learned from their story?

## DISCUSSION

1. What stands out for you as you read this story?
2. What is significant about this story occurring after 400 years of silence from God through any revelation to the nation of Israel?
  - If God's plan is unfolding perfectly as it always does, how can you remain hopeful and faithful even when He seems silent?
3. What do you learn about Zechariah and Elizabeth?
  - What kind of people are they?
  - What is Zechariah's job?
  - Why do you think it happened that the "lot" fell upon Zechariah to be the officiating priest for offering incense on this particular day?
  - What does the offering of incense represent?
4. The angel Gabriel's message involves twelve separate points about John's birth and ministry in verses 13-17.
  - Which do you think would have been most important to the people of John's time? Which are most important to you?
5. Which part of this prophecy does Zechariah question and disbelieve? (1:18)
  - Why do you think he can't believe it?
  - What kinds of things are we unable to believe that God does in spite of us today?
  - What is the difference between unbelief and asking the hard questions?
  - Why is asking the hard questions necessary to deepening faith?
  - What is the wrong attitude in asking questions of God?
6. When we face dark and distressing circumstances, you may have trouble believing that God is working it all out for our infinite good.
  - How have you continued to wait with the faith that "nothing is impossible with God?"
  - What encouragement can you bring to people living in a "season" of unbelief?