“The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” - Luke 18:27, NKJV

Elizabeth and her husband Zacharias were righteous people who walked in all of God’s commandments and ordinances. They were blameless. They were a godly couple who loved the Lord and were faithful to Him in all they did. They lacked one thing. They had no child because Elizabeth was barren.

How it must have broken Elizabeth’s heart that she could not bear children. Year after year she and Zacharias must have tried to conceive but to no avail. What must have gone through her mind as the years went by and she was getting older. Seeing her friends and neighbors have children while she remained childless must have been torture for her. I would like to think that Zacharias loved her, although the Lord had closed her womb. A wife needs to know that in spite of her inability to have children her husband’s love for her will not change.

Did Elizabeth think about Sarah who had also been barren? Or Rachel who was barren until God blessed her with Joseph and Benjamin? And Hannah who couldn’t have any children but prayed about it one day and was blessed with Samuel? Was it possible for Elizabeth to still have a child? She must have clung to that hope for as long as she could but with each year, that hope must have slowly died as she came closer and closer to the age where she could no longer bear children. And now she was well past the childbearing age. However, God had a plan which He was about to reveal to Zacharias through His angel.

What a shock it must have been when Elizabeth learned that she would have a son. Did she doubt like Zacharias? I don’t think so. I believe that she had faith that in spite of her age, she was going to be a mother. She was going to among the few privileged women who had children in their old age. And this was no ordinary child she was going to have. He was to be a prophet who would prepare the people for Jesus’ coming.

Then, the big day arrived and Elizabeth gave birth to a son. Her relatives and neighbors rejoiced with her when they heard of how the Lord had shown her such mercy. When it came time to name the child, it was assumed that he would be named after his father, but in faith, Elizabeth insisted, “No; he shall be called John.” And John became John the Baptist. Of him, his father prophesied, “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God” (verses 76-78).

God did the impossible for this couple. He can do the same for you. Don’t lose hope. Trust Him.
Devotional
1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Do you find yourself wishing you could pray better or play the piano or have stronger faith? You're not alone. Many of us at one time or another felt inadequate when we compared ourselves to other church members. I remember that at the weekly prayer meetings, I was terrified of praying with others. After listening to eloquent prayers, I had no idea what to say. I would stumble and falter because I was so nervous and felt embarrassed afterwards.

Eventually, I learned how to pray comfortably with others but accepted that intercession was not one of my spiritual gifts. I learned that my spiritual gifts are exhortation, giving and writing. Not everyone will be able to pray powerfully or play a musical instrument or teach a Sabbath School class. According to Paul, it is the Holy Spirit “who works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills”. He is the One who decides which gifts we are best suited for. Sometimes, though, we are blessed with gifts we never imagined we would have. I'm sure Peter, the impetuous, quick-tempered fisherman never once thought that one day he would be an elder in the church. His gift was shepherding. I never dreamed that I would be the leader of any ministry but God put me in charge of three when the time was right and the Holy Spirit equipped me.

So, if you like music, join the church choir. I did and it’s an experience I will always cherish. I’m not a singer but I joined because I wanted to praise God through music. Whatever spiritual gift(s) you have, use them to glorify God and to edify the church. Use what you have to bless others.

If you don’t know what your spiritual gifts are and are interested in finding out, set aside some time and take this test.

Health Matters

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone – Matthew 23:23

Anise is commonly known as dill. In Jesus’ time it was given as a tithe. Apparently, the Talmud requires that the seeds, leaves and stem of dill be used to pay tithes. It is also believed that the Romans served it in order to avoid indigestion and flatulence.

In medieval times people used anise to gargle and to treat tonsillitis. Pliny recommended chewing it to get rid of “morning breath” and advised people to keep it near the bed to prevent bad dreams. During the 16th century, Europeans used anise to bait mice and trap them.

Read about its many benefits, one of which is reducing menstrual pains.

Sources: Bible Study Tools; Our Herb Garden; Foodofy