

A monologue based on the story of Elizabeth (needs to be read out loud, not just read).

A Midwife's Tale

based on Luke 1:5 -25, 35-39, 56-80



WHEN I FIRST READ THE CASE NOTES I really thought someone had made a mistake. Well, I ask you, would you expect to go and deliver a baby to a woman who by rights should be a grandmother?

Oh, and another thing – she had a mute husband. So here was I, expected to look after a geriatric mother and a dumb husband. To cap it all they were from the priestly tribe, so they were bound to look down on me.

Now don't get me wrong, I know that these accidents happen. Mind you, at their age they should have been more careful, although this was going to be her first - and as you know to be barren is the worst curse for a Jewish woman. So I suppose when she found out, she was probably delighted.

She was quite a sweet woman, totally bewildered, couldn't understand how it had happened, being married all those years! She said that she was like Sarah – at first I thought she was meaning Sarah Barjonah in the next street, but then I realised she meant THE Sarah, you know Abraham and Sarah — founders of our nation.

“So, you'll be telling me this baby is a gift from God,” I quipped. Her “Yes” was so positive, it was eerie.

“Zechariah lost his voice when he didn't believe me.” She said that to me with a twinkle in her eye.

“Oh, I believe you,” I retorted. “Imagine me without a voice, I'd never survive.”

Considering her age, her background, her problems with her husband, she was very calm about this baby. Apart from when she had a visitor, a young cousin up from Nazareth to see her. Her baby became so active; he wasn't giving her a moment's peace.

To tell you the truth, I was a bit worried about attending her as I'm not that keen on dealing with older women. I mean, come on, she had so much that could go wrong, and when things go wrong, who gets the blame? Me, muggins here. It's never their fault, it's always because I've not done my job properly.

But Elizabeth was different, she had a serenity about her, she seemed so sure that everything would be all right. I sent up several prayers, I can tell you. I even remember praying, “If this really is your doing Lord, then keep her and the baby safe.”

We had some good talks together; she told me that her husband had had a vision and that this child she was carrying was a boy and that he was going to be a prophet.

Well, there's no harm in a mother having her dreams. If he was anything like the others I've delivered, he'll be a revolutionary, wanting to set the world to rights.



It was a good pregnancy, very little to worry about, if you ignored her age and the fact it was her first. To be fair it was an exceptionally easy birth — and it was boy. It did my heart good to see her hold him with that look of total amazement on her face at this miracle of a new life.

“So how's baby Zechariah,” I asked her on one of my visits. There was what you might call a pregnant pause, then Zechariah spoke. It was such a shock to hear him speak. He said, “His name is John.” John? What sort of name is that for a child of the priestly tribe? But John it was.

I kept visiting Elizabeth; she was a good mother, not too overprotective, if you understand my meaning.



When I first met Elizabeth, she had likened herself to Sarah; but I think she was more like Hannah, you know Samuel's mom, for she too gave her son back to God.

I did hear that he was related to this miracle worker called Jesus, but that seems a bit unlikely. But it is as unlikely as a woman her age having a baby. So maybe there is some truth in it!

You don't meet many Elizabeths like her, but I'm glad I met this one. She certainly made an impression on me. Out of all the babies I've delivered, I remember so clearly her giving birth – it might have been yesterday.

Shortened from the original *The Midwife's Tale* 2002.



A time of prayer

Elizabeth is an unsung heroine of the Bible. She seems almost incidental to the story, yet what she brings to the Gospel narrative is amazing.... Mirroring Sarah and Hannah, longing for children – A miracle- an answered prayer.

Although we may not think of ourselves as part of the Gospel – we are- we too can have answered prayers. Maybe not in the dramatic way of Elizabeth, but still answered.

What are you praying for- do you believe, and trust God will answer your prayer?

Elizabeth is the person Mary turns to when God chooses her as the mother of Jesus, who do you turn to when you are need reassurance that God is asking you to do something?

Pray for that person now.

The role of a Jewish women in the home in teaching the faith was very important. John would have received his grounding in the faith from Elizabeth. She could tell him his story, how special he was and to understand his role in God's plan.

Who helped you to understand the scriptures? Pray for them now....

We pray for our roles in church, what we can do and bring to each other in support and encouragement that the Gospel is to be shared in our community, with those around us.

Pray for yourself and that you come to know God's plan for you... you are never too old.