

UNEXPECTED

The real story of Christmas



The Unexpected Arrival

Date: Sunday 6th December

Speaker: Kat Densham

Key Verses: Luke 1:1-80

Talk Summary:

- Waiting when nothing seems to be happening. This was true of Israel (who were waiting for the Messiah and who had heard nothing from God for around 400 years), and reflected in Zechariah's own life (he and his wife had given up hope of having a baby).
- Surprises from God: God answers the prayers of the people and the prayers of Zechariah, in a very surprising way!
- God is a God of hope and faithfulness. Nothing is impossible for him, even when it feels impossible to us - the unexpected can happen and Jesus wants to meet us there.
- Once Zechariah announced his baby's name, he could speak again and the first thing he did was praise God, then he was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied about John - he sees the Big Story.
- Jesus' arrival was full of surprises and unexpected too, but Jesus is God himself, coming to live among us, not just a human baby with a big destiny. Jesus is the ultimate unexpected gift, God with us.
- The most surprising thing about Jesus' birth is that he came for *everyone*.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? (*Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it*)

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- Has God ever surprised you? Ask a few people to share if they'd like to.
- Have a read of Luke 1:5-25 as a group. What do you notice? Put yourself in the scene: how would you react? What does Zechariah's reaction (as a priest) tell us about the reaction of the people to John and later to Jesus? (Depending on your group, you could compare Zechariah's reaction with Mary's in verses 26-38).
- Zechariah and Elizabeth both express doubt, and the angel reacts differently to each of them. How do we feel when we doubt things God has said, or things we think we should believe? What does God want to do with our doubt?
- Is there anything you feel God's promised you that you're still waiting for? How can we do waiting well (i.e. honestly, faithfully)?

Witness

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus.

- If you didn't already make a Christingle, you could do so this week. Use it to pray for the light and saving power of Jesus in your home/neighbourhood.
- **Our carol service is the PERFECT opportunity to invite friends, family, colleagues and neighbours to meet with Jesus this Christmas.** There will be two in-person services at the City Centre site (10:30 and 5:30) plus the same times online, with some incredible music and video content from our teams. **Your challenge this week is to invite at least 3 friends to the service!** If we all do this, together we'll invite over 1000 people to experience the love of Jesus this weekend. Download an invite and send to them here: [Shareable Invite](#)
- Let us know how you get on, stories@birminghamvineyard.com or on social media. We'd love to be praying for your friends as well!

Note to Small Group Leaders: Please note that if you'd like to review the sermon, or have a hard time following the video, you can use subtitles on YouTube. On the YouTube video, click the "closed captioning" button (bottom left of YouTube video screen, first button). Google "how to show subtitles on YouTube videos" if you need help with this.