

## **Esther & Emmett - December 19, 2021**

Emmett: Hi Esther. How are you today?

Esther: Hi Emmett. I'm fine. I just finished reading the story in the Bible that is going to be read at this Sunday's worship service.

Emmett: That's great! What story is it?

Esther: It's about a woman and a man who give birth to a son.

Emmett: It's almost Christmas, so of course we're going to read that story in church. It's the story of Mary and Joseph!

Esther: Actually, it's the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah.

Emmett: Elizabeth and Zechariah! Elizabeth and Zechariah! You mean all this time I've been calling them Mary and Joseph and their names were actually Elizabeth and Zechariah!

Esther: No, Mary and Joseph were the parents of Jesus!

Emmett: Aren't we talking about Jesus?

Esther: No we're not.

Emmett: You mean there's another kid in this story?

Esther: There's another story about the birth of a baby named John.

Emmett: John...not Jesus?

Esther: Right. Jesus was the son of Mary and Joseph, and John was the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah!

Emmett: So, there was a baby Jesus and there was a baby John?

Esther: Right.

Emmett: There's lots of babies in this story! But why does the story tell us about John? I mean, I know why the story tells us about Jesus, because there were angels singing and there was the manger and Jesus was going to tell the world about God's love.

Esther: John also told the world about God, but John was a little different from Jesus.

Emmett: Different in what way?

Esther: Well, Jesus and his disciples moved about from village to village.

Emmett: Yeah, they sure got around.

Esther: But John stayed in one place and people came to him.

Emmett: What kind of place? Was it like a church?

Esther: No. John was in the wilderness, by the Jordan River, and when people came to see him, John said that they had to change their way of seeing the world.

Emmett: Did he give them new glasses?

Esther: No, he baptized them.

Emmett: He baptized them! You mean like the minister does with babies at church, putting drops of water on their heads?

Esther: Not exactly. John was baptizing adults. He probably took them into the river and then dunked them under the water and brought them back up.

Emmett: I bet nobody slept when he was talking!

Esther: It was symbolic!

Emmett: If you say so!

Esther: It was a way of showing that people were being washed and made ready for a new day; it was like they were being born again.

Emmett: That sounds symbolic! See, I wasn't sleeping while you were talking!

Esther: Yes, it was symbolic. It was a way of helping people realize that, just like a newborn baby discovers a new world, God wanted people to discover a new world, the world of God.

Emmett: Wait, God created the world....so hasn't it always been God's world?

Esther: Yes, but people don't always remember that it's God's world and that we should love the world and love each other the way God wants us to love.

Emmett: And all John had to do was dunk people under the water – I mean, baptize them – for them to remember about God's love?

Esther: John also talked to the people. He said that if anyone had two coats, they

should give one coat to somebody that didn't have any coats, so that person could stay warm when it got cold.

Emmett: That sounds like something God would want us to do. Hey, it sounds like something Jesus would want us to do.

Esther: One of the reasons we talk about both John and Jesus is that the Bible says that John was preparing people to hear Jesus' message.

Emmett: That was nice of him.

Esther: It was like John told people to get ready to live as people of God, and then Jesus showed people how to live as the people of God.

Emmett: Like sharing food with people and caring about them and being friends with all sorts of people, and healing them...all that kind of stuff?

Esther: Right. So this Sunday we hear the story about John as a baby as a way to prepare us on Christmas Eve to hear the story of Jesus as a baby.

Emmett: There sure are a lot of babies in these stories.

Esther: There sure is a lot of God in these stories.

Emmett: Amen!

Esther: And Amen!