

Christmas Brings

Hope

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Pastor Dale Satrum



1. God sees our need

Luke 1:13 "But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John."

(NLT=New Living Translation)

- God knew their greatest hurt

- God _____

1 Peter 5:7 "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you." (NLT)

Psalms 103:13-14 "The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. ¹⁴For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust." (NLT)

2. God always has a plan

Luke 1:14-17 "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." (ESV=English Standard Version)

- God's plan will take care of your _____

- God's plan will take care of your _____

And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth

- God's plan will advance His kingdom narrative

And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth

Ezekiel 36:26 "And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart." (NLT)

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." (NLT)

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." (NLT)

3. Circumstances can't stop God

Luke 1:18 "And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." (NLT) It's physically impossible!

Luke 1:19 "Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news!" (NLT)

- Circumstances steal our _____
- God specializes in the _____

4. God fulfills what He promised

Luke 1:57-58 "Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her." (NLT)

- Our hope is in the _____

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?" (NLT)

Genesis 3:15 "...he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (NIV=New International Version)

- The bible is filled with _____ to give us hope

Romans 15:4 "Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled." (NLT)

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Discussion Questions:

1. Christmas can create a host of emotions. What emotions do you experience as you anticipate this Christmas?

2. Read the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke 1.
3. How do you feel knowing God sees your needs? Is it difficult at times believing God does see our need, our pain, our sorrow or our hard circumstances?
4. God always has a plan. What three things will God's plan accomplish in your life?
5. We've all struggled with hope when circumstances are hard. What truths about God help us cling to hope no matter what?
6. Our hope is fixed in the character of God and what He has promised. Discuss Numbers 23:15 and why this matters so much.

