

LIFE GROUP LESSON

HOME - Week of December 3

Pray

We extol you, Lord, and praise your great Name. Truly, all your works shall praise you. We your saints bless you, Lord, for you are most worthy of all glory and honor. Along with all the company of heaven, we worship and adore you. Lord, help us speak of your greatness to those around us, to our children and the people you put in our path.

*Lord, apart from you, we have nothing – we humbly ask, will you come Holy Spirit? Please bring us to a place of repentance, forgiveness, acceptance and gratitude. Prepare our hearts for your coming. Lord, help us be your people. Give us the mind of Christ and fill us with your light and love. May we understand the way home. Help us see that with you, nothing is impossible.
In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Introduction

Since the birth of the Church, many have tried to understand the wonder of the incarnation. Why God became flesh to make his home among us? What is meant by the Son being *the only begotten* of the Father. Who *is* Jesus Christ?

There is no story like God's story or redemption. The gospel of Luke opens: "Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples." (Luke 1:1-2). Peter wrote in his letter, "For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes" (2 Peter 1:16). John the beloved shared in his epistle: "We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). If the Lord Jesus is the Son of God, why did God allow his Son to be born in such humble surroundings?

Background

The sign was given that a virgin would conceive a child and be called Immanuel *God with us* (see Isaiah 7:14). When the time neared, God sent Gabriel to Nazareth – to a virgin betrothed to a descendant of king David's royal lineage (Joseph), and says: "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!... you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" (Luke 1:28b, 30b-33). Mary's plans were interrupted by God's message through the angel. Yet, she chooses to trust the Lord.

Read: Luke 1:26-45

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

Reflection

Two birth announcements are recorded in Luke, chapter one; both are by the angel Gabriel. Gabriel tells Zechariah that he and Elizabeth will have a son in their old age and are to name him *John*. Gabriel tells Mary she will have a son and his name will be *Jesus*. Yet, upon receiving the joyful news delivered by Gabriel, notice how Zechariah asks, "How can I be sure this will happen?" It does not appear that Zechariah shares the same joy, at least initially. It may be that a child does not fit in his plans at his age. In fact, Zechariah seems to doubt as he asks, "*How can I be sure this will happen?*" There are times we *think* we hear a word from the Lord, but then begin to doubt when we step back and think about the

logistics. When God's ways do not make sense, there are times, we too, want a sign from the Lord.

However, trust in God overrules our worries over 'the detailed coordination of a complex operation involving many people' (definition of logistics). Faith simply trusts God. When Gabriel announces the news to Mary, though she also asks a question – "*But how can this happen? I am a virgin*" – the angel doesn't mind telling her *how this will happen* because, regardless of logistics, she believes. When Gabriel says the child will be conceived of the Holy Spirit, Mary is good with that. Having a baby without a man might be a problem, but not with God. Gabriel says – "For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37) – if anyone knows this, Gabriel does, for "I stand in the very presence of God" (Luke 1:19a). As a result of her faith, Mary was at peace with the message (see *Mary's Magnificat*, her *Song of Praise* vv. 46-55).

In Closing

For some reason, it often seems that God works best when things don't make sense. "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine" (Isaiah 55:8). May we remember that when we are in the tough throes of life, God sees the big picture! The way home begins with trust and acceptance – *Lord, may your Kingdom come; may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. Friend, you can experience peace if you will view your problems through God's promises. In fact, your simple childlike faith will also bring God's peace to your homes. The journey home has never been easy for any of our heroes of faith. We certainly see this with Mary and Joseph as they leave Nazareth and head toward Bethlehem. Yet, we also see how God provides for them every step of the way.

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

December 3: Daniel 11:2-35, 1 John 3:7-24, Psalm 122:1-9, Proverbs 29:1
December 4: Daniel 11:36-12:13, 1 John 4:1-21, Psalm 123:1-4, Prov. 29:2-4
December 5: Hosea 1:1-3:5, 1 John 5:1-21, Psalm 124:1-8, Proverbs 29:5-8
December 6: Hosea 4:1-5:15, 2 John 1:1-13, Psalm 125:1-5, Proverbs 29:9-11
December 7: Hosea 6:1-9:17, 3 John 1:1-14, Psalm 126:1-6, Proverbs 29:12-14
December 8: Hosea 10:1-14:9, Jude 1:1-25, Psalm 127:1-5, Proverbs 29:15-17
December 9: Joel 1:1-3:21, Revelation 1:1-20, Psalm 128:1-6, Proverbs 29:18

HOME

Text: Luke 1:26-38, Daniel 9:20-27

PLAIN TRUTH

Viewing _____ through God's

_____ brings _____ to our home.

1. God's promises give us _____ in the midst of _____ and _____.

2. Reminder - Peace is not the _____ of _____.

December 3, 2023