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Message: Connection at Home

Luke 1:15-17

12/17/23

Discussion Questions:

1. We all feel lonely at times. When do you feel lonely? Why?
2. When do you feel the most connected to God? Why?
3. Most people think God wants us to be good not in relationship with Him. Why? How can we change that?
4. What aspect of John's purpose is impacting to you?
5. Which of the 5 points spoke most clearly to you? Share.

Teaching Notes:

Home for the Holidays is the title of our series this month.

Home is a where you feel content, comfortable & connected.

...and it is nearly always linked to warm relationships.

Message title: Connection and Home

When you are "at home" literally or figuratively...

...you feel connected.

Home is where somebody notices when you are no longer there." — Aleksandar Hemon

Big Idea: Feeling connected is powerfully positive but feeling disconnected is dangerously depleting.

This year the Surgeon General declared loneliness and isolation an epidemic.

They are finding what God has already revealed...

...it is not good for people to be alone...we need connection.

...Life is not about being good or bad...

...and you know this...life is about relationship.

God's heart is for you to be with Him.

The home we truly long for is to be home with Him.

So what gets in the way of that?

It's the same thing that gets in the way of all good relationships...
...it is our own selfish ways.

In theological terms we would say, our sin...

...the things we do that God doesn't do or want me to do.

Jeremiah the prophet talked to a group of people that had turned away from God, their hearts were hard and they were far from God.

Jeremiah 24:7

I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD. They will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with all their heart.

Jeremiah 30:22

"And you will be My people, and I will be your God."

Jeremiah 31:33

"But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD. I will put My law in their minds and inscribe it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be My people.

Jeremiah 32:38

They will be my people, and I will be their God.

God desires connection with His people...

...corporately and personally.

Let's take a look at the life of the one God sent before His Son.
His name was John the Baptist.

The Angel said about Zacharias's baby...

Luke 1:16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. **17** He will also 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 a people prepared for the Lord."

Israel was meant to be connected with God...

...but like many of us today...they were distracted.

1. Distraction damages connection.

They were distracted doing their own things their own way.

But now God was sending a prophet to get their attention.

John will also turn the hearts of fathers to their children.

Part of turning to the Lord who created you is turning to the family that you are part of.

We cannot be connected with God and...

...be ok with being disconnected from people...

...especially our own families.

I John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar...

2. Selfishness damages connection.

The other connection John will make is with...

...the wisdom of obedience to God.

You cannot be connected to God without obeying God.

Selfishness is sinfulness.

John had to be connected to God himself.

Look at this earlier description of John...

Luke 1:15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

First, he would be great in the sight of the Lord...

Matthew 18:4 Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Pride divides but humility builds connection.

3. Humility helps connection.

Humility could be defined as the choice to take a lower place to give others a higher place.

CS Lewis said, Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. ...a humble person "will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all."

The 2nd thing we see is, he won't drink wine or strong drink,

This is not about drinking. This is about commitment.

4. Commitment helps connection.

The final description is he would be...

...Filled with the Holy Spirit of the Lord

How can we be filled with the Spirit of God?

You have to be willing.

5. Willingness helps connection.

One pastor said, “When Paul calls us to “be filled with the Holy Spirit”, then, he is calling us to unlock the doors, and joyfully submit every aspect of our character and life to Him.”

To be filled with the Spirit you give Him access.

Connection with God begins with the humility of coming to Him,

Connection grows when you make a commitment to follow Him...

Connection is strengthened when your heart is continually willing to obey Him.