



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Was there anything about the sermon today you'd like to discuss further? Anything that stuck out to you or that you wanted clarification on?
2. Zechariah and Elizabeth lived exemplary lives of obedience. (v 6) Even so, one of their deepest desires had been denied by the Lord. (v 7) Has this ever happened in your life? How did you feel? How should we think about those unmet expectations?
3. In verse 9, when Zechariah is chosen to enter the temple to burn incense, it was a really big deal. Most priests, statistically, would never have this chance. Zechariah got to experience a special presence of the Lord. That same presence is now available to every Christian because of the death and resurrection of Jesus. How does experiencing the presence of the Lord grow your hope in his promises?
4. In verse 13 the angel tells Zechariah that his "prayer had been heard, and Elizabeth will bear you a son..." Have you ever felt like God didn't hear your prayers? When and why? What does Scripture teach about prayer and how does that relate to today's theme of hope?
5. We see in the life of John the Baptist some teaching on how God views "life in the womb." John had been given a name by the Lord, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and known by the Lord. How should that shape the Christian's view on issues like abortion? What other passages are relevant to this discussion? How does it relate to our theme of hope?
6. Zechariah is rebuked and experiences consequences for his doubt. (v 20) When have you doubted a promise given by the Lord? What experiences surrounded that doubt and how were they different/the same as Zechariah's?
7. What do you hope for this season? How can looking at hope as the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus past, present and future giving you new hope for today? How will that change the way you live this Advent season?
8. Read Romans 15:13. Spend some time praying this prayer for the people in your small group. Be sure and pick up a "Gifts of Christmas" devotional booklet to use this Advent season.