

:: summary

Zechariah and Elizabeth waited a lifetime for a child. Mary waited for the angel's declaration to come true and then she and Joseph waited for the birth of Jesus. Both couples waited for the fulfillment of God's plan in the lives of John and Jesus. Longing is desire unfulfilled. Waiting on the Lord is the spiritual activity you do while you wait for fulfillment of God's promises.

Luke 1:38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."

Luke 1:76-79 "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Luke 1:37 "For no word from God will ever fail."

:: explore and discuss it

Fulfillment is the achievement of something desired, promised, or predicted.

Describe an experience of waiting you have had (or maybe are in now). What did (does) fulfillment look like?

Read the three texts above. In the message, Pastor Mike encouraged you to fill your waiting with *confidence* that God can and will do what he says (Luke 1:38), *vision* of what the promises of God will look like when fulfilled (Luke 1:76-79), and *steadfast faith* that enables you to cling to God even in tough times or long waits (Luke 1:37).

Discuss how each one is helpful to living in seasons of expectancy and longing. How do these three complement each other?

Read Psalm 33:16-22

What encouragements and truths does it contain about waiting? About hope?

Read Psalm 130:5-7

What aspect of the Psalmist's words strengthen you?

:: make it personal

How does waiting with confidence, vision and steadfast faith grow you spiritually?

What is one deep longing you have for this world?

:: pray it

Read Isaiah 9:6-7 then as a group pray for that vision to become a reality. Pray also for one another based on your sharing.

"Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: None of my words will be delayed any longer; *whatever I say will be fulfilled, declares the Sovereign LORD.*'" (Ezekiel 12:28)

For Christians, there is no "to be continued." The story of God is not a "*to be continued* ..." story - we do know the end of the story because God has revealed it and has promised it will come true. For us, there is only a "*to be fulfilled!*" story. In steadfast faith and confident hope we wait.

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