



TITLE: COME ALL YE FAITHFUL - Signs of HOPE

BIG IDEA: HOPE is the Assurance of something not yet seen, because God said it.

ICE BREAKER: What are you HOPING for this Christmas season?

MAIN SCRIPTURE:

Luke 1: 26-38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called ^{the} Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

OPENING THOUGHTS:

God doesn't ask us for blind faith or HOPE without signs. He will give us signs as he lays out his plan. It may be hard to believe and require trust in what feels impossible without him. That's why he's given us, Jesus, the promise of Emmanuel; God with us!

MAIN POINTS:

Signs of HOPE

- REJOICE; YOU ARE FAVORED BY GOD
- A SON IS BORN
- THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME ON YOU

- NO WORD FROM GOD WILL EVER FAIL
- I AM THE LORD'S SERVANT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. (Read Luke 1:1-38) What are some of the similarities in the Story of Zachariah and Mary?
Answer: "Zacharias was troubled" (v. 12). Mary "was greatly troubled" (v. 29) "the angel said to him (v. 13)."the angel said to her" (v. 30). "Don't be afraid" (v. 13). "Don't be afraid" (v. 30). "will bear you a son" (v. 13). "will...give birth to a son" (v. 31). "and you shall call his name" (v. 13)."and you will call his name" (v. 31). "he will be great" (v. 15). "He will be great" (v. 32). "said to the angel" (v. 18). "said to the angel" (v. 34). "The angel answered" (v. 19). "The angel answered" (v. 35). "Gabriel...God...sent" (v. 19)."Gabriel...sent...God" (v. 26). "Behold" (kai idou) (v. 20)."Behold" (kai idou) (v. 36).
2. What's the difference between Zachariah's and Mary's responses to Gabriel?
3. The reminder to us from both Zachariah's and Mary's story is "DO NOT BE AFRAID" What fears do we need to submit to our HOPE in Christ?
4. How will these "Signs of HOPE" (Main Points) change the way you respond to uncertain times or trails in life?
5. Which one of these "Signs of Hope" will you hold onto for the uncertainty in your life right now?

FURTHER STUDY:

CHALLENGE:

Are you Questioning God's plan or Hoping for an explanation of God's will? (Zachariah's Unbelief or Mary Asking for Understanding and submitting to God's plan) This Christmas season, will you allow fear and doubt to grip you like Zachariah, or will you submit your unbelief to the signs of HOPE like Mary? I am the Lord's servant; let your will be done in my life.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Father God, every word in scripture points to the gift of HOPE we have because of Christ Jesus. The Christmas story wasn't the beginning of that message of HOPE because all scripture is full of glimpses of your plan to redeem your people and restore them to a relationship with you. Still, we can truly begin to see and understand just how great your love for us is when we read the story of Jesus' birth. Help us to see that you are Emmanuel, God with us: We are Favored by God You sent your Son You have given us the Holy Spirit Your word will never fail We are your Servants Jesus came to give us the gift of eternal life through the salvation that only you, our Heavenly Father, can give when we believe in your Son, repent of our sins, and confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior. That first Christmas, you gave us the gift of HOPE! Thank you, Father God. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen!