

FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING JESUS

DINNER TIME DISCUSSION:

In what area(s) of your life do you need to believe that "nothing is impossible with God"? How can you do this?

GOSPEL IN EVERYDAY LIFE:

Do you remember your main takeaways from this fall's series, *Rooted in Grace*? What do you need to remind your heart of this week?

How does thinking on God's presence, faithfulness, or providence relate to this?

ADVENT ACTIVITY:

Author Justin Earley suggests giving up your phone while you wait. Since Advent literally means "to wait," putting your phone away gives several opportunities daily to lean into what waiting truly feels like. Try it. You might be surprised at what and who you notice.

MEMORY VERSE:

*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through
all generations.*

*The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does.*

Psalm 145:13, ESV

DEVELOPING DISCIPLINES:

Each morning during your morning commute to work or school, make it a point to say (to yourself or out loud): "Nothing is impossible with God" Then joyfully surrender the things you worry and wonder about in your upcoming day to God.



Leader Resource Guide

Date: December 12, 2021

The Gift of God's Providence



SERMON NOTES

Luke 1:26-56

1. Understanding Providence.

1 Samuel 30:1-6; Psalm 138:7-8; 139:1-16; Jeremiah 29:11; Psalm 25:1; Romans 8: 28, 31-32

2. Providence in the visit of Gabriel.

3. Providence in the visit with Elizabeth.

4. Providence in Mary's song.

5. Our Response to Providence.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Finish the sentence: "Since the Lord is with me, then I am encouraged that..."

What evidence of God's faithfulness did your group unearth while reading Scripture this week?

CHRIST CENTERED DISCUSSION:

1. **If Mary was a guest in your Life Group, or speaking with you personally, and she was sharing her story (as found in Luke 1:26-38), what would she be telling you?**
Summarize it in 1-2 minutes in your own words, including facts, feelings, etc.
2. Put yourself in Mary's position as she encountered the angel Gabriel. What would you be feeling, questions you would have? When were you recently fearful, but believing? How did God meet you?
3. Read Jeremiah 18:6, Isaiah 29:16, Isaiah 64:8 and Romans 9:20-21. How does the image of the potter and the clay help us understand God's providence?
You can discuss the topics of the potter's intention and purpose, as well as ability and authority to do what he/she wants with each bit of clay.
4. **Pastor Brian used John Piper's definition of providence which says "Providence is God's purposeful sovereignty." God's providence is his power and authority applied to accomplish his good and all-wise purposes. In Mary's song, v. 47-55, what examples are there of God's providence, or purposeful sovereignty? What does she affirm regarding who God is? Therefore, "who wouldn't want to be in the hands of this good, all-powerful God?" How do you answer this question in light of your experience currently? Or your experience in the last several years?**
Walk through the text and pull out specific examples of what God did and who God is. Group them into categories if that's helpful. What themes emerge?

5. Mary's response to the angel was "Be it done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). What comfort does it bring you to know your circumstances are "according to God's word" and are actually evidence of His providence?
What if you're not comforted by this reality right now? The psalms are full of evidence of God's people wrestling through difficult circumstances (examples: Psalm 6, 27, 42, 46, 62, 77, there's not a wrong answer here, being in the psalms is witnessing the honesty of God's people). Pick a few and pay attention to their lament and their resolve. Pray for God to bolster your faith, enter into your pain, and comfort you. This seems like a simple, concise answer. The realities that this question requires us to face are windows into some people's deep pain. Don't brush past this. And also begin to build the muscles to cry out to God expectantly. Use the psalms to guide you.
6. **What does it look like to live in joyful surrender in the awareness that God is not only all powerful and authoritative, but also infinitely wise, good, and full of mercy, love and grace? Share personal examples or from the lives of others faithfully following Jesus.**
Use this time to encourage your group members. Consider coming up with examples in each member's life beforehand that you could share or put each member "into the hot seat" and have other members share examples of joyful submission they have seen in that group member's life.
7. Compare Luke 4:16-21 (Isaiah 61:1 & 2) with Luke 1:47-55. Notice how Jesus' ministry impacts all areas of life, such as social ethics (the proud), politics (kings), economics (rich and poor), social issues (violence), spiritual issues (holiness, mercy of God). When you see the breadth and depth of God's powerful reach, "who wouldn't want to be in the hands of this good, all-powerful God"? Talk about places and times in your life where it is difficult to see and remember God's providence.