

## FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING JESUS

### DINNER TIME DISCUSSION:

Read Zechariah's song in Luke 1:67-79. Of the promises listed in Zechariah's song, which one means the most to you at this stage in your life? Why?

### GOSPEL IN EVERYDAY LIFE:

Pastor Dave talked about how Zechariah carried a sign of his sin. How do you interact with people who are carrying signs of their sin? Do you offer them forgiveness and grace? What does your treatment of them communicate?

### 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:

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight.*

Ephesians 1:7-8, ESV

### DEVELOPING DISCIPLINES:

As an activity to help you reflect on the forgiveness you've received from God, write a song of praise to God using the special events of your own spiritual journey. Share it with someone (you don't have to sing it!).



To be a Christ centered community helping people faithfully follow Jesus both locally and globally.

## Leader Resource Guide

Date: December 19, 2021

*The Gift of God's Forgiveness*



## SERMON NOTES

Luke 1:57-80

### The Story

### The Celebration

### The Response

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

When you think of the Christmas narrative, which person or group of people do you most relate to? Why?

Reflect on the gifts God has given us as presented in the 4 Advent sermons, and how they show that the gift he has given us is God himself. (God presence, his faithfulness, his providence, and his forgiveness.) How are they interconnected? Which did you need to remember and receive the most? How has God used these advent gifts to minister to you in your life this season?

*If you plan on meeting the weeks after Christmas and New Years, use this as the basis for your discussion during that time. Recap the Advent sermon series and plan for Spiritual Growth in 2022 as a group.*

As we start to plan for our Spiritual Growth Plans for 2022, take some time this week to just remember what you've done in the 2021. Make some notes about this!

*We will be providing more in depth resources for creating Spiritual Growth Plans over the next two weeks, so this could be used as a teaser question.*

## CHRIST CENTERED DISCUSSION:

1. In Luke 1:57-66, how did the neighbors respond to these events? How does all this begin to promote the Gospel?
2. In verses 68-79, what are the things God has done for which Zechariah praises him? What do these tell us about who God is?
3. Pastor Dave talked about the celebration of forgiveness. Look at the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1- 10 as an example of the parts of that celebration. How does Zacchaeus respond to Christ? How does this impact his actions? How does this impact his attitude?  
*These three questions provide a great pattern in general when looking at different people throughout Scripture.*
4. Forgiveness has to be received in order to carry out its full purpose. What might be going on in our hearts when we fail to receive the forgiveness God offers? What lies might we be believing about ourselves and about God that would cause us to reject forgiveness?  
*In order to receive, we must acknowledge our own sin and need of a savior - we must confess that we can't save ourselves. If we won't receive forgiveness we are likely believing lies that God's standard is not perfection (that we may not need forgiveness) or maybe that his grace isn't sufficient (that we need to add to it).*
5. What kinds of things does truly and fully receiving forgiveness lead to in our hearts and lives? How will it impact how we view and treat other followers of Jesus, or not-yet followers of Jesus?

6. What does it mean to ponder something or lay it up in your heart? In order to grasp the full joy we receive through God's forgiveness, it takes regular reflection on the forgiveness we've received. What are some practical steps this week we can take to reflect on his glorious forgiveness?  
*Some of us really struggle to quiet our hearts and lives enough to reflect on anything. And the Christmas season can do a great job of distracting us from getting that time and space to reflect. Do you struggle with this? What tips can we share with each other to help us be good "reflectors?"*
7. How has God unfolded his plan of salvation in your life? Who helped prepare the way for you? Who could you help to prepare the way for? Who could you share the Gospel with this Christmas season?  
*The sermon series in the new year will be a walk through of Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy. It's called "Take the baton, Pass the baton." The big idea of the series is that we should always be both taking the baton of God's truth and purpose and passing it on to others. This line of questioning will be surfacing often throughout that series. How can we take the gifts of God and "pay them forward" to others around us?*
8. Pray together as a group. Pray for the people you want to accept God's gift of forgiveness this Christmas season. Pray for your opportunities to interact with those people. Pray for God to prompt other believers to interact with them too. Pray for their open ears, mind and heart. Have everyone choose a partner and pray for each other's person throughout the next weeks.