

FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING JESUS

DINNER TIME DISCUSSION:

Read Psalm 92:2 and remember God's faithfulness in this day.

GOSPEL IN EVERYDAY LIFE:

What do you need to trust God for in your life? How does God's faithfulness enable you to trust Him?

We can trust: Who he is. What he promises. What he says.

This does not mean: God will do whatever we want or we will understand all that God is doing.

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:

*It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
to sing praises to your name,
O Most High;*

*to declare your steadfast love
in the morning,
and your faithfulness by night,*

Psalm 92:1-2, ESV

DEVELOPING DISCIPLINES:

Journal Prompt:

When your story doesn't unfold like you want, are you prone to blame yourself (like you are being punished) or blame God (like He's not faithful) or neither or both? How does the story of Zachariah and Elizabeth speak to both of these feelings?



Leader Resource Guide

Date: December 5, 2021

The Gift of God's Faithfulness



SERMON NOTES

Luke 1:5-25

- The backdrop of darkness**
Days of Herod
Elizabeth: Barren
Zechariah: Forgotten
- The reality of faithfulness**
The names
The answered prayer(s)
The fulfilled prophecy
The great reversals
The faithful purpose
- The response to faithfulness**

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Share an example of how you have experienced God's faithfulness recently; this past year; 2 years.

What does your name mean?

Do you know why you were named that?

CHRIST CENTERED DISCUSSION:

1. God remembers. God is absolutely faithful. These are the meanings of Zachariah and Elizabeth's names. How do these traits of God play out in their story? How do these characteristics of God look in your life?
This question is a great way to review the sermon and also personalize experiences of God's faithfulness.
2. What could have caused Zechariah to doubt, question the truth of the angel's announcement that Elizabeth would bear him a son?
Ex: Decades long bareness, old age, he only sees the obstacles, forgets what God can do, et. al.
What caused the doubt to disappear?
3. Where/how are you currently doubting God and his promises? What has caused the doubt?
Some starting places: Physical and/or emotional pain, unanswered prayers, fears, habitual sin, et. al.
How can you embrace God's loving-kindness, faithfulness and promise that he is with you so that you may experience his hope, peace, comfort, assurance, and be able to rest in God being enough for you?
Practicing Habits of Grace (this is a saying and a helpful book by David Mathis) -place yourself in a posture of asking the Spirit to show you God's rich faithfulness to you throughout the day. Store up for yourself evidence of his grace, mercy, love, and faithfulness so that when trial comes, you can persist in believing and trusting. This could be a rich discussion within your group of ways each of you practice placing yourself in the pathway of God's grace.
4. Discuss Psalm 92:2. Brian challenged us to practice the rhythm of declaring God's steadfast love in the morning and his faithfulness at night. What is the potential value of doing this?
What might this look like in your life?
The Gospel Transformation Study Bible suggests:
 - Every morning declare God's love for safekeeping through the night and be reminded of your dependence on the Lord for the whole day ahead (James 4:13-17). The very existence of the morning convinces us that God's work of redemption is ongoing. (Jeremiah 31:35)
 - As the day dies down, remember God's protection and other blessings experienced that day.

5. The Bible provides us with an abundance of examples of God's faithfulness to His people from Adam through the Age of His Church, as we know it. Take time as a group to recall some of these examples of God fulfilling His promises and allow space for awe and wonder at His work throughout history.
Examples of God's faithfulness throughout Scripture: Delivery of Noah & his family, promise to Abraham/Isaac/Jacob, Joseph from slave to royalty, delivery of Israel from Egyptian bondage, appointment of David as King, fulfillment of OT prophecies in Jesus, sending of the Holy Spirit, the rapid growth of the Church... etc
It is a great practice to get into while reading Scripture to trace God's faithfulness through the stories. Paul and Peter were constantly recounting instances of God's faithfulness in their letters to early church believers. Challenge your group to make a list as they read Scripture this week and share it with each other the next time you meet.
6. Pastor Brian said that sometimes God doesn't come through like we think he should come through.
Below are two questions (general and specific) to choose from to interact with this idea.
 - a. Have there been times in your life when you did not like the story God was writing for you or for someone you love? During those times, how do you cling to and believe in the faithfulness of God?
 - b. In the sermon, Brian shared about several women who were chosen to bear special children for special reasons after waiting for a long time. We all know people who never get that yes after long and excruciating waits. God is just as faithful in these situations. How can we rest in that and encourage others to rest in that?
Brian said "ultimately by God's grace" they were able to bear children. This does not mean God's grace is absent when there is no child.