

Advent 2016 HOPE

Christmas Songs

Luke 1.67-80

His faithfulness fuels our hope

Hope is that steady focus on what is to come

- It's not an emotion but a place of focus
 - The side effects are plenty – not the least of which is steeling yourself in the midst of trial and hardship
- It is rooted in the faithfulness of God and fuels itself from the same faithfulness

Zechariah and Elizabeth's story – Luke 1.5-20

God is faithful to His people (1.68-69)

- He hasn't left them alone
- He hasn't left them enslaved
- He hasn't left them hopeless
- And all of these apply to YOU

God is faithful to His promises (1.70-75)

- No unfulfilled promises
 - Deliverance from enemies (Romans? Demons)
 - Mercy – steadfast affection set upon His people
 - Service / Worship without fear
- No determining circumstances
 - When childlessness is its own trial – Abraham and Sarah
 - When family drama works to destroy your dreams – Joseph
 - When you never achieve what you've been working toward – Moses
 - When you have failed again and again – Judges
 - When your job doesn't work out – David and Saul
 - When your kids make different choices – David and Solomon
 - When society is going to hell around you – Amos
 - When discipline puts you distant – Exile
 - When the glory that was isn't the glory that is – Ezra and the temple
 - When silence is the only response – 400 years Intertestamental Period

You and I have reason for hope in the midst of our worst circumstances and most profound fears

God is faithful to His plan (1.76-79)

- There is a Voice (v.76-77)
 - He prepared the way for the Lord's coming (3.4-6)
- There is a Savior (v.78-79)
 - He comes because of the tender mercy of God
 - He gives light and guides us
 - He does so to anyone who trusts Him – no matter the baggage or background

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is your favorite Christmas memory? What's the funniest thing you remember about Christmas?
2. Reread Luke 1.5-25 (the backstory to Zechariah's song). What points of connection do you see between the backstory and the song? What differences do you see?
3. Why do people struggle to apply God's faithfulness to themselves? How often does this happen to you? Why (or during what kind of circumstance)? How do you deal with it?
4. What is a promise of God that you have held on to during difficult times? How did the situation end up? How did it keep you going? How did it fuel hope?
5. Why did God send a messenger before He sent the Messiah? Reread 1.14-17. How did John's ministry described there become fulfilled?