

**LIFEGROUP STUDY
IN THE WAITING
TRUSTING GOD IN THE WAITING
DEC. 13, 2020**

LEADER NOTES

"But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." Romans 8:25

Welcome to week 2 of our 3-week series leading up to Christmas, "In the Waiting". Over these three weeks we are exploring the importance of waiting in our faith journey. In this week's study, Trusting God In The Waiting, we'll see how God uses liminal space (the space between what was and what's next) to grow our trust in Him. Today we will explore the stories of two bible characters, Zechariah and Mary. As your group reads their stories, ask God to show you how their experience can speak to waiting on Him. The goal of this week's study is you would cultivate trust and hope as a key response when God asks you to step into a season of waiting.

ICEBREAKER: I Can't Wait!

What are you excitedly looking forward to this Christmas? Maybe you can't wait for your loved one to open that perfect gift you chose. Maybe you can't wait for Christmas morning around the tree, or to watch your favourite Christmas movie again this year. Share with the group the first thing you think of that you "can't wait" for this Christmas.

STUDY

1. What was a highlight for you from Pete's teaching on Sunday?

2. Definition of Patience from Week 1.

"Patience is the ability to wait in discomfort without losing your peace."

- What does it mean to wait in *discomfort*?

LEADER NOTE: "Discomfort" means that waiting is costing you something. The waiting impinges on your desire to have life go your way, to be convenient, comfortable, predictable.

- How can you know you are experiencing *peace* in the waiting?

LEADER NOTE: As we trust God's promises for our life, we can experience God's peace. This peace does not mean an absence of conflict or trials, rather, His peace is the calm inner assurance that we are right in our relationship with Him and walking in accordance with His will.

3. In his teaching on Sunday, Pete talked about "liminal space".

- What is it like to be in a liminal space? Can you give an example?

LEADER NOTE: The word liminal comes from the Latin word 'limen', meaning threshold – any point or place of entering or beginning. A liminal space is the time between the 'what was' and the 'next.' It is a place of transition, a season of waiting, and not knowing. The Bible is filled with examples. God called Mary to a liminal space as she waited to see how He would fulfill His promise that she would give birth to God's Son, even though she was a virgin.

- Why is liminal space so important to cultivating our hope and trust in God?

LEADER NOTE: It takes faith to enter liminal space. Faith is trust in the character of God. Trust that I can move from a place of safety and certainty into a place of risk uncertainty. I can make this move because I trust in the character of who God is.

4. READ: Luke 1:5-25

- What liminal space did the angel ask Zechariah to live in?

LEADER NOTE: God asked Zechariah to trust His promise that his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son. The fulfillment of this promise would have seemed impossible to Zechariah, knowing that he and his wife were well beyond child bearing years.

- Why do you think the angel wasn't pleased with Zechariah's response? (see vs. 18)

LEADER NOTE: In his response, Zechariah asks, "How can I be sure this will happen?" Zechariah wanted certainty. God wanted faith. In his response, Zechariah showed a lack of faith in God's promise. Rather than trusting in God's word through Gabriel, Zechariah looked at his circumstances and concluded, "This is impossible!"

- How do you relate to Zechariah's experience?

LEADER NOTE: It's easy for us to look at our circumstances and conclude the same thing Zechariah did – "this is impossible!" In his response, Zechariah showed the weakness of our human condition. Too often we see with natural eyes, rather than eyes of faith. Zechariah was a righteous man (1:6) yet he

was prone to doubt. We can relate to Zechariah's frailty and thank God, along with Zechariah, for His grace.

5. READ: Luke 1:26-38

- What liminal space did the God ask Mary to live in?

LEADER NOTE: In Gabriel's proclamation, God asked Mary to trust that He would fulfill His promise that she would give birth to God's Son, even though she was a virgin. He asked her to trust that she would be part of His great plan of bringing salvation to the world through Jesus. Mary didn't know any details of how this would happen. She could only wait for God to carry out His sovereign plan in her life.

- Why do you think the angel's response to Mary was different than the response to Zechariah?

LEADER NOTE: The angel's response to Mary was different than his response to Zechariah because, while Zechariah's initial response expresses doubt, Mary's heart posture is faith and trust. Although she asks a similar question to Zechariah, "How can this happen?" (vs. 34) she asks already believing that God will accomplish what He is telling her He will do.

- What does Mary's example teach us about the values of trust and hope in waiting?

LEADER NOTE: Trust is choosing to believe God's promises will be fulfilled in my life, even when they look impossible, even when I don't know how He will bring them about. Mary teaches us that our circumstances don't dictate the outcome God has chosen for our life. His plans will prevail. Hope is our expectant attitude while we wait for God's promises to come to pass. Mary waited 33 years to see God's purposes fulfilled through her son. She waited in expectant hope.

6. What would you say to encourage someone who is struggling to live in a liminal space?

LEADER NOTE: As we've done in this study, there is great benefit in reading the examples in the Bible of those who God has called to live in a liminal space. We have much to learn from them. When a believer is struggling to live in the liminal space, encourage them not to give up. Pray for them. Remind them that followers of God down through the centuries have been in a similar space. Just as God was faithful to see them through that challenging season of life, He will be faithful to see them through to the other side of their liminal space.

7. What is a key takeaway for you from this study?

PRAYER

Creekside supports the N Family as they serve in ethnomusicology and aircraft maintenance in Southeast Asia.

Please PRAY for these requests from them:

- Our return is based upon so many unknowns. Jason's visa, the kids visa, COVID tests that are less than 2 weeks old, letters from a Doctor saying we're healthy, and airplane tickets.
- If Jason does not have a visa before January, Erin will have to return alone to renew her visa. She must be in Sentani by January 13th. She also needs all the appropriate documentation and health clearances to do so.
- Erin will return Canada depending on Jason's visa. She will again need the appropriate medical (Covid) clearances to leave again. Also, she will need a place in Ontario to quarantine.
- In the past, getting airplane tickets has been very stressful, there are fewer flights, cancellations are rampant, and routing constantly in flux.