WOODVALE
PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Connect Group Sermon Aligned Discussion Guide.

Series Title: Christmas Promises: Joy
Key Scripture: Luke 1:1-20, 57-77
Recorded Sermon:
https://www.woodvale.ca/pastservices/v/christmas-promises-joy
Date + Speaker: December 15, 2024; Pastor Mark Scarr

Starter:
Have you ever waited, or are you waiting, for something that feels like it's taking hundreds of years to come? How do you wait? Patiently? Anxiously? Hopping on the edge of your seat? A deceptive stillness? Refusing to think about it?

Discussion:

1. How does Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 1:67-79 reflect the joy of God's salvation and the fulfillment of His promises?
2. In Luke 1:44, it was not the words of Mary, but the presence of Jesus, that caused John to leap for joy. What causes us to leap? Is it the presence of Jesus or other things that He comes with?
3. Pastor Mark remarks that the time between Isaiah 35 and Luke 1 was hundreds of years. Is there a promise or prayer that feels like you've been waiting hundreds of years for it to come? How do you retain joy and hope while waiting?
4. Pastor Mark reminds us that silence doesn't mean God has not heard. Every prayer we pray has been heard by God. How can we retain the certainty that God hears us? How does this certainty help us face all of life's situations and even the waiting times with joy?
5. In Luke 1:64, as soon as Zecharaiah's mouth opened, he began to praise God. What would we have done if we were Zecharaiah? Would we start praising God or saying something else? What else could he have done or said?
6. Christ's coming fulfils prophecy (Luke 1:70-75). What prophecies are fulfilled by the coming of Christ? How and why do these promises and their fulfilment make us joyful?

7. Christ's coming gives us purpose (Luke 1:74-79). What purpose does Christ's coming give us? Reflect on our purpose as the body of Christ and as individuals. How might we fulfil that purpose and serve Him?
8. Christ's coming brings blessings (Luke 1:78-79). What blessings does Christ's coming bring for us? Do we need to do anything to take and keep these blessings?
9. Pastor Mark reminds us that Christmas is all about Jesus. How do we make it about other things rather than Jesus? What else do we make it about other than Jesus? What would help us make Jesus the focus of Christmas and of the world for ourselves and for others?
10. Pastor Mark reminds us that God's joy is our strength (Luke 1:69; Nehemiah 8:10). How does God's joy strengthen us? How does the silence and stillness Pastor Mark asks us to adopt help us draw from this strength?

Diving Deeper:

11. What is it about God's joy that stays with us even in times of difficulty and hardship? How might we grow and strengthen this joy in our lives?