



UNEXPECTED HOPE.

Advent is a season of hope for the hopeless.

Christmas may be merry and bright, but honestly, Advent marks a season of more weary anticipation. Waiting for God to show himself after 400 years of silence. Waiting for the Messiah to come save them. And for Elizabeth, waiting for a child.

As an old woman, it was not looking good for her and her husband. But they continued to pray. Because enduring hope does not rest in our ability to make things happen. Hope can't rest in things we think we can control. That's not really hope at all, is it?

God stepped into their story and brought waves of hope via the unexpected and the seemingly impossible: an angel's visit and a voiceless man and a growing belly.

Advent may be a season of weary anticipation, and 2020 may be a season of weariness, period. But we have hope. We have hope knowing the Messiah *has* come and he will come again. We have hope knowing God can do the impossible. We have hope knowing God is with us and for us.

There is hope, even for the most hopeless.

IN THE BIBLE.

Luke 1:5-7

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. 6 Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. 7 But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

Luke 1:11-17

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. 13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. 16 He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Luke 1:23-25

When his time of service was completed, he returned home. 24 After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. 25 "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS.

Feel free to talk through some or all of these questions

- 1.) What sticks out to you in Elizabeth and Zechariah's story?
- 2.) What did Elizabeth and Zechariah do with their hope? (see verses 6 and 13)
- 3.) What do you hope for?
- 4.) Where do you find your hope?

TAKE TEN:

- How did you see God work in your life this week?
- What has God been teaching you in His Word?
- What kind of conversations are you having with your pre-Christian friends?
- What good can you do around here? (in your life/circumstance)
- How can we help you in prayer and what do you want us to ask you about next week?

Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?