

Small Group Discussion Questions

// Week of December 17th, 2023

LEADER INFO

Christmas Services:

- December 23rd: 4pm
- December 24th: 9:30am, 11:15am, 4pm, 6pm
- Please go to <https://southsidelife.com/christmas> and register for your FREE tickets for those services. We are expecting thousands of people and want make sure that we can fit everyone in!

Events:

- Text "NEWS" to 604-670-3040 to start up to date with all of the events at the church!

GROW This section is based on the sermon from Sunday. You can find it here:
<https://www.southsidelife.com/>

ICE BREAKER Does your family celebrate on Christmas Eve or Christmas day?

It's Still True

Read

1. Luke 1:39-45

39 At that time, Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, **40** where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. **41** When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! **43** But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. **45** Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Discussion

1. What a Bond we have in Jesus

- a. Pastor Mike highlighted the incredible bond that Elizabeth and Mary would have had with each other. So much so, that Mary decided to travel 160 miles to go and see Elizabeth. They had a bond because of their experience and their expectation
- b. They both shared the experience of meeting an angel and the blessing of a supernatural pregnancy. They both shared expectation because Elizabeth was carrying John, who would prepare the way for the Messiah, and Mary carried Jesus, who was the Messiah.
- c. We all share a bond with one another through our experience and our

expectations as well. We can each look back either at a significant, stand-out moment in our lives, or look back over time and see consistent, steady faithfulness where God showed himself to be good. We share a bond through experience in our Sunday Services; especially looking forward to our Christmas services next weekend. God is going to radically alter the course of human history, and the fabric of eternity, by Jesus showing up and changing one life, one story at a time.

- d. Christmas is a time when people will attend a service when they wouldn't typically step foot in a church.
 - i. Who are you inviting to our Christmas services this Saturday/Sunday?

2. What a Life we have in Jesus

- a. There is a saying "if you want to make God laugh, tell Him your five year plan". True, but it's also good to plan and use wisdom in our lives, but ultimately, we want to allow God to lead us. Pastor Mike said "Jesus doesn't take the wheel. He won't carjack you and run away with your life." We need to take hold of our lives, but listen to God and be okay with Him leading us.
 - i. Do you struggle to take the wheel at times? Do you struggle to allow God to lead at times?
- b. There is another saying, "the safest place to be is in the center of God's will." Not true. Mary having to journey 160 miles to see Elizabeth wasn't safe. John the baptist preaching Jesus wasn't safe (he ended up being beheaded). Jesus preaching the gospel wasn't safe (he ends up dying on the cross for us.) Not safe, but it's good. We can see there are times of hurt, pain, anxiety etc, but God never fails to show himself faithful, trustworthy, and good.
 - i. Discuss the saying "the safest place to be is in the center of God's will".

3. What a Friend we have in Jesus

- a. At times, it can be hard to imagine Jesus as being our best friend. We might have an easier time knowing that he died so we could live and have eternal life. Maybe we accept that He is Lord and we allow him to lead us in life and trust him with the future. But believing that he is our friend might feel difficult.
- b. Maybe we have pictured him or been taught that he is something he is not. A blond haired, blue eyed big brother. A grumpy, mean sibling who is always trying to catch us doing something wrong and telling on us. Fill in the blank. But Jesus calls us friend. He is there for us and loves us deeply.
 - i. What does friendship mean?
 - ii. How can we view Jesus as a friend?

4. When we meet Jesus face to face, we will notice these four things:

- a. He is Familiar - I hope that you have had some good friends in your life. When you meet Jesus, he will be familiar to you because those friends that were the best of the best, they were with someone created in the image of God. We are connected through how God created us. Jesus will feel like a friend we have known, but the best of the best.
- b. He is Faithful - Everyone has stories. If you tell your stories at small group, maybe every once in a while it would end with a “but I guess you had to be there. But if you were to bring your best friend to small group and tell those stories, they would say “ya, I was there, it was awesome”. Those stories are more meaningful to share with people who are present. When we get to heaven, and share our stories with Jesus, he will say “I was there”. He has been there for every single one of them.
- c. He is For you - Jesus isn't interested in the clean, sanitized, and regular parts of us. He isn't focused on what we can do for Him or how we perform. When we meet Jesus, we will know that he is absolutely for us. He loves every part of us. The quirky, the parts that we don't want everyone to know about, the mistakes... He loves us.
- d. He is Floored by you - Hebrews 12:2 “Jesus endured the cross, scorning it's shame, for the joy set before him.” You were that joy. Everything he did,

he did for you. When you lock eyes in heaven, you will realize that he cares so much. You will finally completely believe “there is nothing you can do to make him love you more.”

- i. Which of the four points stands out the most to you?

PRAY