

Taking it Home

1. Take time this year to sit in front of a Christmas tree and read the Christmas story as if it was your first time reading the story. Enjoy imagining yourself in the sandals of one of the characters. Embrace the joy of knowing that God sent His Son to invade time and space because of His great love for people.

2. If you are able, attend Christmas in the Red (12/10-12) to see a dramatic portrayal of these themes. Watch one who identifies himself based on his accomplishments while another responds to God in simple faith. (more info: www.christmasinthered.org)

Object Lesson

Imagine being Zechariah and Elizabeth, waiting years to have a child, dealing with the shame of bareness. What love must have consumed them as they welcomed baby John into their arms! God's love for you is even greater. You can hardly imagine our Father's love for his children, created in His image.

Prayer Requests

1.

2.

3.

A Tale of Two Recipients
Luke 1:5-38

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Bethel Church
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A Tale of Two Recipients

Zechariah and Mary both received a message of prophecy from an angel, yet their responses contrast spiritual pride and spiritual humility.

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelc.com

Growth Group Homework

For the week of December 6, 2009

Luke 1:5-38

Quick Review: The stories of Zechariah and Mary offer a contrast of how we can each respond to God in our lives. Zechariah missed an opportunity to respond by faith because he was blinded by his religious trappings. Mary, on the other hand, responded with simple faith. What particularly caught your attention, confused or challenged you?

My Story

1. Between Zechariah and Mary, who do you most readily identify with? Why?

2. Describe in your own words a time when you found yourself more like Zechariah: caught up in the trappings of religion and/or basing your self worth on your accomplishments.

Growing Deeper

1. Zechariah and Elizabeth have been praying for years to have a child. He is a righteous man much like is spoken of Noah, Abraham and Job (Genesis 6:9; 17:1; Job 1:1). Read Genesis 17-18 and compare Zechariah/Elizabeth with Abraham/Sarah. Much like Abraham with Isaac, God is going to answer Zechariah's prayers for a child in ways he could never have imagined (1:13-17; 1:25). Read Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6 to see how John the Baptist will be the Elijah to come.

2. Read Luke 1:18 and compare/contrast Zechariah's response to that of Mary in 1:34,38. In both situations, the individual was consumed with fear at the presence of an angel. In both a promise was given of a child to come. What stands out to you about how Mary responded vs. how Zechariah responded?

3. Read Psalm 131. David prays to not be occupied with things too great or too marvelous. The image is of a dependent, content, satisfied, trained, trusting child who with confidence knows his parent will care for him. Compare Mary's response to David's heart in Psalm 131.