



PART 1: WAITING IS THE HARDEST PART

Sermon Notes

Text: Luke 1:5-25

Introduction:

“The waiting is the hardest part. Every day you see one more card. You take it on faith. You take it to the heart. The waiting is the hardest part.” ~Tom Petty

Advent means “coming,” which makes it a season of waiting - waiting for “Our Coming Saviour”

Some Old Testament Prophecies of Jesus

- Genesis 3 - God prophesied about Eve’s “seed” coming to crush the serpent.
- 1000 years before Jesus, King David prophesied about a king like him who would come to establish his throne in Israel.
- 700 years before Jesus, Isaiah prophesied that a virgin would give birth, and the messiah would suffer for his people.
- 400 years before Jesus, Malachi prophesied that the desired king would come to the temple.

The Story of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-25)

Zechariah and Elizabeth were “blameless”, but had trouble conceiving. Socially, this would have caused them shame since people believed infertility was related to personal sin. However,

God transformed their situation by orchestrating a great plan to birth John the Baptist, who would introduce the world to Jesus.

Advent Hope

Definition: a confident expectation of a future result.

Hope is the first theme of Advent. Hope is based on promises. A pregnancy is a great illustration of hope: A baby is promised, and parents posture themselves for the future fulfillment of that promise.

Hope is often born out of lack. But hope helps us endure present lack while waiting for the fulfillment of a promise.

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.” ~Martin Luther King Jr.

How do we hope?

1. Patiently

Romans 8:24

Galatians 5 (the fruit of the Spirit) - “Love, joy, peace, *patience...*”

Patience is about being content to accept the circumstances we cannot control for as long as necessary.

“Long obedience in the same direction” ~Eugene Peterson

2. Prayerfully

v. 13 – Gabriel said “Your prayer has been heard.”

Zechariah and Elizabeth were not just praying for a child, they were praying for *the* child. Because they expanded their prayers beyond just their own needs, God answered both their large

prayer and their personal prayer at once. *Their* child would introduce the word to *the* child.

Luke 1:76-79

Conclusion:

Life Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. Warm up: Would you consider yourself a patient or impatient person? If you're a patient person, what's your secret? If you're not a patient person, what's the most frustrating thing you have to wait for?
2. Do you think our society is designed to foster impatience? How so? How could we get better at patience?

Study & Discussion:

1. Read the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-25). What stands out to you about their experience? Is there anything you can relate to? How would you respond to a similar situation (visit from an angel or news of a pregnancy)?
2. Read some of the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22:16-18; Isaiah 9:2-7; Malachi 3:1). Can you find others? What are these prophecies saying? How did Jesus fulfill them? Can you find scriptures that prove they were fulfilled? How would it have felt for the nation of Israel to wait so long for these prophecies to be fulfilled? How can we learn from them as we wait for Christ's return?
3. How would you define "hope"? Read Romans 8:18-25. How does this passage define hope? Why is hope so important? What happens to people who lose hope?

Application:

1. Pastor Dave defined patience as being content to accept the circumstances you cannot control for as long as necessary. What do you think of that definition? How can you practice patience this week? What is one circumstance you need to start accepting?
2. Zechariah and Elizabeth certainly must have prayed for a baby for many years, but they also prayed for *the* baby, the messiah, to come. God answered their personal prayer, by answering their prayer for their nation. How can you expand your personal prayer into a prayer that encompassed your whole community? (i.e. don't just pray for your marriage, pray for all the marriages in the city - one of which is yours!).

Prayer:

1. Pray for the return of Jesus.
2. Pray for patience in the circumstances you face
3. Other requests (make sure you expand each of these prayers to include your community).
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