

# Pregnant with Hope

November 28, 2021

Luke 1: 5-56

## The Christmas story teaches us how to wait.

This Sunday is the start of the Advent season. “Advent” means “arrival.” While we wait and prepare to celebrate Christmas (God coming to us), the Bible offers some stories to show us how to wait. We learn that waiting on God’s promises to be fulfilled is a time for love, peace, hope, and joy. The stories of two pregnancies – Elizabeth and Mary – give us reason to hope and cause for joy, even when our current circumstances are difficult and uncomfortable, just like a pregnancy.

**1) God is the \_\_\_\_\_ . When God makes a promise, \_\_\_\_\_ . He keeps it in a way that shows his love for \_\_\_\_\_ and his love for \_\_\_\_\_ .**

(initiator, he keeps it, humanity, each of us)

11 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.”

THINK IT OVER

**Zechariah and Elizabeth wanted a child. What is it that you are waiting for?**

**2) When we ask God for the deepest desires of our hearts, he \_\_\_\_\_ . We have every reason to \_\_\_\_\_ .**

(hears us, hope)

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.”

THINK IT OVER

The Bible says that Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes (verse 6), and yet for most of their life they were childless, even though they prayed for it. What does this say about the reasons we might not be receiving what we ask God for?

3) The model response to God's promise, even though it might require a lot from us, was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

(trust, obedience)

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

THINK IT OVER

The difference between Zechariah's and Mary's responses is subtle. Zechariah asked the angel for a sign (verse 18) while Mary asked the angel for the next step (verse 34). What is surprising or not surprising about these responses?

4) God gives us \_\_\_\_\_ to share our \_\_\_\_\_. (each other, joy)

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 has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

THINK IT OVER

How is God asking us to wait during the next few weeks? How is God asking us to wait during the rest of our lives?