

The Thrill of Hope - Part 3 - Luke 1:57-66

Icebreaker:

Please share with us an event like graduation, job, marriage, retirement, where you anticipated meeting a future goal or achievement. Did the result live up to the expectation?

Hope: “Merriam-Webster”

- Verb: To cherish a desire with anticipation: to want something to happen or be true.
- Noun: A desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment.

Here’s why you need this sermon:

“You are called to invite others into the thrill of hope.... because of God’s love and mercy.”

Scripture Passage:

Luke 1:57-66 57 When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. 59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, 60 but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.” 61 They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.” 62 Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. 63 He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. 65 The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. 66 Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him.

Sermon Statements:

- “Sometimes it is necessary to take a stand to please God which in turn displeases others.”
- “Obedience to God in that which doesn’t make sense can awaken hope in those

who are unprepared for God.”

- “Your faith grows when you stand strong in the face of opposition.”

1. What do you think was so important about the name “John?” (vs. 61, 64)

Note: John’s name meant “God is Gracious” and it appears that Elizabeth and Zachariah were acting in obedience to God. Luke 1:13

2. Describe an instance when someone offered their opinion when you knew they did not have all the pertinent information. Based on your knowledge did you do the right thing by not being swayed by popular opinion?

3. What was the effect of your actions?

4. What actions could you preemptively take to help you stand your ground and be a positive influence when there are differing opinions?

5. Why do you think the neighbors asked the question, “What then is this child going to be?”

6. Could the neighbors’ question be interpreted as being sarcastic or optimistic? Please explain.

7. What can we do to be prepared for unexpected questions asked from our friends and neighbors?

Note: Zachariah surely would have been aware of the Old Testament prophecy as mentioned in Malachi 3:1 *“I will send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me.”* In addition, Zachariah a few months earlier had an encounter with the angel Gabriel who relayed that his prayers had been answered and (reference: Luke 1:11-20).

8. When Zachariah’s mouth was opened, what was the focus of his speech? Luke 1:64.

9. What are the things we know and/or have personally experienced that can help us to replicate Zachariah’s message of “praising God” before our communities of influence? Why do you think it is so hard for us to (1) remember the blessings

of God, or to (2) share those blessings with others?

10. What are some things/activities we could do to remember and share the blessings we have received from God with others?

Scripture Passage:

Luke 1:76-80 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, 77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven 79 to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” 80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

11. What knowledge do you think Zachariah shared with his audience concerning the “Thrill of Hope”?

12. What did Zachariah say his son would be doing? (vs. 76-79) (key words: prepare, give, shine, guide)

13. How does this prophesy provide us hope for them and us?

Scripture Passages:

John 10:10 “vs.10 ...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 14:2-4, 6 “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am....vs. 6. Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Matthew 28:18-20 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and

teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

14. From the Biblical passages above, what are some elements Jesus mentioned which could be related to our current Hope?

15. Is it possible for you to incorporate one of the elements identified above into your daily living? What might be some obstacles you will have to overcome in making this element a part of your daily life?

16. What can our circle group do to help you overcome the obstacle(s) you will face?