

THE HOPE OF CHRISTMAS

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

START WITH AN ICEBREAKER QUESTION: YOU CAN FIND SOME ON PAGE 6 [HERE](#).

TEXT:

Matthew 1:20 (GW)

Joseph had this in mind when an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said to him, "Joseph, descendant of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She is pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:30 (GW)

The angel told her, "Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God.

WHAT IS A FAITH BASED CHRISTMAS MEMORY YOU HAVE? IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY, GO AHEAD AND SHARE THAT.

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU THINK WE PUT A ROMANTIC VIEW ON THE CHRISTMAS STORY, WHEN IN FACT MANY PARTS WOULD HAVE BEEN RATHER DIFFICULT?

WHEN YOU HEAR SOMEONE SAY, "I HOPE I GET THAT JOB" OR "I HOPE MY SON GETS INTO THAT COLLEGE" WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY TRULY MEAN WHEN THEY USE THE WORD "HOPE?"

JOSPEH RECEIVED HOPE AFTER HE WE CONVINCED GOD'S PLAN WAS MESSED UP. HOW DO YOU DRAW CLOSER TO GET TO GET HOPE IN DIFFICULT TIMES?

Matthew 1:20 (NIV)

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

WHEN WE FOLLOW GOD, WE SOMETIMES THINK EVERYTHING WILL WORK OUT SMOOTHLY, BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, WE ARE FOLLOWING GOD! NOT THAT WAY FOR JOSEPH

AND MARY, OR US. WHAT IS A TIME WHEN YOU KNOW YOU WERE IN FULL OBEDIENCE TO GOD, YET EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTY?

Luke 2:15-19 (NIV)

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

JOSEPH AND MARY "MARVELED" AT SIMEON. THEY WERE JUST DOING THE NORMAL THING, AND SIMEON JUST KIND OF DID HIS THING, YET IT RESONATED IN THEIR HEARTS. HAVE YOU HAD MOMENTS LIKE THIS, IN MOMENTS OF FAITH STRETCHING, WHERE GOD SAID/DID SOMETHING THAT CAUSED YOU TO "MARVEL?"

Luke 2:25-33 (NIV)

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.

When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

The child's **father and mother marveled** at what was said about him.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO MARVEL AT NOW, INSTEAD OF STARING AT CLOUDS OF DOUBT?

John 8:12 (NIV)

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."