

Quick Review

Look back from your sermon notes – Was there anything that particularly challenged you from this sermon? Anything you didn't understand, agree with or connect with?

Introduction

Pastor Jeff talked about the phrase “encounter.” There are different definitions of the word, sometimes used in a “negative” connotation and sometimes used in a “positive” connotation. When you hear that word, what comes to your mind? Any stories or events that have happened in your life? Share or explain with the group!

Digging In

Read Luke 1:5-20

Question 1: Read Luke 1:5-6. Pastor Jeff said, “the godlessness around me should not stop the godliness coming out of me.” Think about the time that Zechariah and Elizabeth were living in. Herod was a corrupt king. Israel was disobeying God. Society was completely controlled by pagan government rule. But Zechariah and Elizabeth were both “righteous” because they trusted and believed God. How does this relate to your life in our culture currently? Do you think it's impossible to live Godly in an ungodly world? Why or why not? What makes you think that way?

Read 1 John 4:4-6

Read Matthew 5:13-16

After reading the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth and these other two passages, how is your perspective changed about living Godly in an ungodly world?

Question 2: Read Luke 1:7,20. Pastor Jeff said, “my problems should not stop my ceaseless prayer.” Zechariah and Elizabeth had very real problems. They had been trying for years to have kids and couldn't. Zechariah was mute for 9 months for his disbelief. Talk about tough problems in life! How often do you allow your problems, trials, or difficulties in your life to affect your personal relationship with God negatively? Share a time where you went through a difficult season and your faith was negatively impacted. How has God changed your perspective since then?

Read John 16:33

Read Romans 8:26-30

Question 3: Read Luke 1:18. Pastor Jeff said, “my faithlessness cannot stop God's faithfulness.” Zechariah doubts God's plan for His life. He said in his head, it's impossible for God to use me and my wife in these

circumstances! He even asks God for a sign to prove it to him! How often has this happened in your own life? What gets in the way of you believing what God says will happen? How does your faith get pushed to the periphery in your life?

Read Hebrews 11:1-7

How do these passages impact you when it comes to your personal faith in Christ? What needs to change in your thinking or trust to help believe the way Jesus wants you to?

Question 4: Read Luke 1:20. Pastor Jeff said, “my shortcomings cannot stop God’s story!” Zechariah and Elizabeth were chosen to be part of God’s story. They were not perfect. They were not divine. But God chose them to be part of His story – even after Zechariah did not believe God! What ways this past week or in recent memory have you thought that God could not continue to use you?

Reflection question: How have you believed that you’ve invited God into your story instead of God inviting you into His story?

Read Ephesians 2:8-10

Praise / Prayer Requests

Pray for your group with these things in mind:

Adoration – How can I praise God for what this teaches me?

Confession – What sin can I confess because of what this teaches me?

Thanksgiving – How can I thank God for what Jesus has done?

Supplication – What do I need to ask of God in order to grow in light of this?