

Sermon Questions for Life Groups

Zecharias' Benedictus: A Song of Saving Purpose

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Sunday, November 27, 2016

*These questions are generated by several authors for Life Group discussions
or family or personal devotions*

1. What is your favourite Christmas Song? Can you explain why?
2. Zechariah and Elizabeth were probably ostracised in their community because of her barrenness. Who do we tend to ostracise in our communities, and how do we go about doing this?
3. According to Genesis 16, Abraham found himself in a similar situation to Zechariah, and also wondered if God would fulfill His promise, at one point even taking matters into his own hands with his wife's servant Hagar. Read also Luke 5:1-25. Zechariah's doubt caused him to lose his ability to speak for the period of time until the circumcision of his son. Why do you think God reacted patiently with Abraham's doubts and yet struck Zechariah mute until the birth? Why does God use situations like Abraham and Zechariah's to bring about His purposes and plans?
4. Read earlier in Luke 1: 11 – 17, the Angel Gabriel first revealed to Zechariah the fact that he and Elizabeth will have a child and what their child will be called to do. Along the same theme, read Zechariah's Benedictus verses 76 – 79 on how the future John the Baptist will go before the Lord. Compare these verses with Isaiah 53: 1 -5 and share what similarities can you find between the O.T. and N.T. references?
5. If the price to accomplish our salvation is completely paid, then why do some people still think that they must complete works to earn their place? Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and then Ephesians 4:12 and discuss works as described here.

6. The theme of Zechariah's song was that God visits His people, redeems them and saves them. There is nothing that we can do in this to deserve it or to save ourselves beyond accepting the help God has offered. Is this a comfort to you, or do you find it difficult to have so little control over your own salvation? Why do you believe that people often reject the gospel as too easy, feeling that they must have to do something more?
7. Luke 1: 77 says "to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins". Pastor John referred to this section in his message as "Erasing all our offences" as part of our wonderful salvation. Please also read I John 1: 7 – 10. From verse 9 in particular, if we have already been forgiven at salvation, and we have God's forgiveness, why do we need to continue to ask for God's forgiveness? (Reference and clue – Hebrews 12: 5 – 11)
8. As an example of God's intervention (visiting His people) and relating to our salvation, read Luke 7: 11-17 about the widow's son, and particularly verse 16. If possible, read from the English Standard Version (ESV), and Acts 10: 30 – 34 where God visited the Gentiles with the offer of Salvation. How can this aspect of God's loving character influence you in the way you share your faith? Can you recount how God had continued to 'visit' you prior to accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour?
9. How has God's saving purpose and intervention been evidenced in your own salvation story? Talk about the things that God has graciously saved you from.
10. Have you observed any limitations in the power of God to bring about salvation in the lives of people that you know?
11. Read Ephesians 1:13, II Corinthians 1:22 and John 6:27 regarding the Seal of God in a believer's life. How would you define what a 'Seal' is? Can you think of any human example where a seal might be placed on a person?
12. There are many verses that speak about assurance of Salvation, such as I John 5: 11 -13, John 10: 27 – 30, Romans 10:13, etc. John 10:14 says "I am the Good Shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." Can you paraphrase this verse in your own words? What does it mean to you?