

Sermon Study | The Way Back To Peace | Luke 2:1-19 December 22, 2019

Dive deeper into this week's message and passages from the Bible. Here are some questions to help you guide your group discussion.

Sermon Review: Jesus came to give us something the world hasn't come up with a satisfying answer for...peace. Peace in the midst of imperfection. God wants you to find your way back to peace, but it's not something to ever be fully understood because peace isn't dependent upon circumstances. The perfect Christmas is the one where you can experience peace, when your circumstances are less than perfect.

**Note to Leaders: Spend some time reading these verses together as a group. Maybe read them out loud or in a few different versions. Or print off the Scripture and take time as a group to underline and circle certain repeated words or things that stand out to you. You may also want to start off or end your time by checking in on anything that stood out from the sermon in general and/or the Daily Bible Readings over the course of the week!*

Warm-up Question: What would the perfect Christmas look like to you? What's your fondest memory of Christmas growing up?

Read Luke 2:1-19

- How do you think Joseph and Mary felt about the timing of the census? Why was it important that Jesus be born in Bethlehem?
- Christmas has a tendency to magnify whatever season you're already in. Mary was expecting her first child and Joseph was doing his best to keep them safe as they traveled. What unmet expectations do you think they were experiencing? How did they find purpose and peace in their circumstances? How do you handle unmet expectations, whether from other people, or even God? What can you learn from Mary and Joseph's example?
- A 4-day trip on a donkey, no available lodging, delivering a baby in a feeding trough! That's the recipe for a stressful situation. Mary and Joseph were experiencing what psychologists call "stress contamination" where a lot of things come together, creating this overwhelming sense of anxiety. What's remarkable about their response? How would you have reacted if you were in their shoes? How do you deal with stress especially during the holidays?
- What do you think Mary was thinking about in verse 19? What are you thinking about during this Christmas season? What brings fear into your mind?

Read Philippians 4:6-7 and 1 Peter 5:7

- What encouragement can you find in these two passages? What worries and fears are you facing right now? According to Paul, how can you experience peace?
- What prayers do you need to start praying to find the way back to peace in your life? How could giving thanks for what has already happened affect your current circumstances? Share how you've experienced this personally.
- God's peace is different from the world's peace. True peace is not found in positive thinking, in absence of conflict, or in good feelings. It comes from knowing God is in control. What are some ways that God's peace is different? How have you seen God in control of your life, even when things seem out of control?

REFLECT

What is God saying to you through His word? How and when will you respond?

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