

# **Christmas with 3Crosses**

## ***“Light Shines in Darkness”***

### **PREPARATION**

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- As a leader you **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Opening Prayer:** (1-5 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week’s message, here’s some suggestions of how your group can invite God into your time together.*

Thank the Lord for sending His one and only Son to be born into this world to live the righteous life that we could never live. Thank Jesus for the gift of his sacrifice on the cross on behalf of us while we were still sinners so that we may be counted righteous in Jesus Christ. Finally pray that the Holy Spirit would open our eyes to God’s grace in our lives so that we can truly grasp the Christmas Spirit and give graciously just as God gave to us!

#### **Discussion:** (30 minutes)

#### **What’s Going on This Week**

This Sunday, Pastor Danny led us into the second week of our series titled *Christmas with 3Crosses*. Pastor Danny focused our attention on the Christmas story at the beginning of Luke in order to wrestle with the tension that even though Zacharias and Elizabeth walked blamelessly before God, they still faced the issue of being barren. Pastor Danny uses the story of Zacharias and Elizabeth to prove that even though we may feel jaded believing that God is withholding His good gifts from us, He is actually working out all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purposes!

**“God delights to give to those from whom much has been taken.”– Pastor Danny Strange**

## Suggested Questions

**Check-In:** Review *Luke 1:46-55*: Last week, our discussion revolved around God's grace and Mary's humble reception of God's gift. As you think about your past week, what line of Mary's prayer resonates with you the most and why?

- **Objective #1: Identify hope for the broken areas in your life story.**

*Primary Texts: Luke 1:5-17*: Pastor Danny begins by exploring this tension: How can Zacharias and Elizabeth be considered blameless before God, yet God (who loves to give good gifts to His people) withholds His blessing of children from them? Barrenness and old age are the contexts in which the Lord decides to lavishly pour out His grace upon the couple at the perfectly appointed time in His story. What are the broken areas in your life that have caused you to doubt God's goodness in your life? Share how you have been praying for these areas to be restored and redeemed even though they may seem mysterious to you now.

*Supporting Texts: Job 28:1-28; Isaiah 55:1-11; Romans 11:33-36; James 1:1-12; 1 Peter 1:3-9*

- **Objective #2: Acknowledge barriers that draw us away from hope in God's promises.**

*Primary Texts: Luke 1:18-25, 57-66*: Next Pastor Danny uses the life of Zacharias and Elizabeth to claim that, "if God can use the child of a barren couple to change the world or the words of a mute man to transform a community, he can and will use the broken areas of your life as part of the glorious story he is writing." What are the situations, feelings, and attitudes that cause you to react like Zacharias and question the goodness of God? How can humility, like Elizabeth expresses, change the way you view your situation in light of God's promises?

*Supporting Texts: Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Matthew 7:7-12; James 1:13-18; 1 Peter 5:8-11; 2 Peter 3:8-9*

- **Objective #3: Encourage each other to live knowing that God is faithful in His time.**

*Read Luke 1:67-80*: Zacharias' final prophecy includes many of the promises that God has made and is about to fulfill in sending His son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. What promises in Zacharias' prayer stand out to you and why? What are the lifestyle changes you need to make in light of God's faithfulness?

*Supporting Texts: Exodus 34:1-7; Deuteronomy 7:7-10; Numbers 23:19; Romans 8:28-39*

## **Closing Prayer: (5-15 minutes)**

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.*

Thank our Heavenly Father for choosing to gracefully open our eyes and hearts to His truth! Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to open our eyes to the significance of Jesus being born in this world and orchestrating this Christmas event through humble people. Pray that the graceful truth of the gospel message would spark in us a grace and compassion to give, receive, live, and worship humbly as we interact with the community around us!

## **THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

**- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week!** Pray that they would continue to find new ways to experience God's grace as they remember that God has decided to move His will forward through their humility!

**-Follow along with our Advent Devotional!** Follow this link to find our [Christmas with 3Crosses Advent Devotional](#) or go and pick one up at the church!

**-Explore New Ways to Give this Holiday Season!** Visit our [Christmas with 3Crosses](#) website to find out more ways to partner with different ministries to share the grace that God has given us!

**- Sign-Ups for the New Community Group Season begin January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019!** If you have any questions, feel free to email AJ at [avanegas@3crosses.org](mailto:avanegas@3crosses.org)

## **Further Reading and Exploration**

**1 Peter** is written to a church community who was suffering persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. The book encourages the church that they have been born-again as God's chosen people and as they undergo suffering, they can hold onto the hope of salvation! This is a great book to be reminded that God, "will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast!"