

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides (December 19th-25th)

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

- 1.** What are your Christmas plans for this year?
- 2.** If you were to design the perfect Christmas gathering, what would it be like?

Bible Study Questions

- 1.** Read Luke 1:5-25, 57-66
 - a.** What do you notice in this story?
 - b.** Put yourself in Zechariah's shoes. Both you and your spouse are old and childless. How would you respond if an angel appeared and told you that you were about to have a child?
 - c.** The significance behind the identification of the angel as Gabriel is that he comes straight from the throne room of God. What images come to your mind when you think of the throne room of God?
- 2.** Read John's description of the throne room of God in Revelation 4. What do you think of as you read this description and picture it in your mind? How does this enhance or challenge the way that you often think about God?
- 3.** Do you consider yourself to be someone who is very confident in the power and love of God or someone who struggles with doubt? Why?
- 4.** When was a time in which you gave up on prayer too quickly or didn't step out in obedience because you doubted God's provision?
- 5.** What difference would it in your life if you fully internalized both God's power and love? How would impact your prayer life? How would it impact your actions?

December 19th
God, I Have a Question: Zechariah

God launching a plan to come into our world, destroy the power of sin, and make a way for us to be restored to God.

Intro: This morning we are looking Zechariah's conversation with God's spokesperson, the angel Gabriel.

The Question: How can I be sure of this? (Is this really going to happen?)

Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth are both advanced in years and childless. This is a disgraceful position to be in. The angel appears and announces that not only will he have a child, but that child will be the one to prepare the way for the Messiah. While Zechariah fully knows the power of God, he isn't buying it. He needs more convincing before he will fully trust that God is going to act.

The Answer: God is on the throne full of power

The angel responds by identifying himself as Gabriel. Zechariah would be familiar with writings from the book of Daniel in which Gabriel stands before the very throne of God...a scene that is full of power. The message is that God is not to be doubted. If he says it, then he will make it happen.

Implications for us:

- **Develop a vision of the greatness of God:** Christians often intellectually believe in God's power, but never internalize the knowledge. We need to have a vision of a God that is full of both unlimited power and love for his people.
- **Confirm your life to the reality of God's greatness:** There is a big difference in a life that fully trusts in a powerful God and one who doesn't. It impacts our prayer life. Someone who believes in the greatness of God, will not give up on prayer, but persevere trusting that God will act. They will also willingly take risks for God trusting that he will provide for them.

Conclusion

There is a second layer to this story. The angel tells Zechariah that "his prayer has been answered." That morning he and the other priests were not praying for an old couple to have a son, but for the restoration of Israel. The angel makes it known that this child will pave the way for the Messiah, meaning that it will launch God's restoration plan. It is the story of a great