

For Further Study

Week of 12-16-12

1. According to Pastor Derek, what is the difference between the Biblical definition of hope and what we commonly refer to as “wishful thinking?”
2. Read Hebrews 11:1. Biblical hope is living now in a way that reflects you know what will happen in the future. What things would you expect to see in the life of a believer today that reflects their certainty of the future?
3. Read Proverbs 13:12. Why does the absence of hope have such a negative effect on people?
4. As a small group, read Luke 1:5-24.
5. From what you remember about the times in which Zechariah and Elizabeth lived, why would it have difficult for them to have hoped that the Messiah was coming?
6. There were 730 years between the time Isaiah prophesied there the coming of a child, Immanuel, would save the people and the birth of Jesus. When have you found yourself waiting on God? How did you maintain your hope in him?
7. Verse Luke 1:6. How does this verse demonstrate that Zechariah and Elizabeth maintained a level of hope in God despite their circumstances?
8. Hope is only necessary in times of difficulty (Romans 8:24). Think about conflicts we read about in the paper. How would our culture look different if it placed its hope in God?
9. Zechariah and Elizabeth were faithful to God, but God hadn’t honored their prayers for a child. Why is it important to obey God, even when God isn’t blessing us in the way we expect him to?
10. Mary also had questions for Zechariah (v. 34). Why do you think her questions were acceptable while Zechariah’s provoked divine punishment?
11. Read v 19. What does Gabriel’s response remind us about the basis of hope?
12. Read 1 Peter 1:3. Why does Peter call Christian hope a “living hope?”
13. What one way you can embody hope this week?