



STUDY GUIDE

BORN **12.16.2018**

[start with prayer]

Missions Prayer Focus this week:
The children of our Missionaries and Church Planters

[set up]

What is one of your favorite ways to prepare for Christmas?

What was a meaningful, insightful, or challenging part from the Sunday's message (whether you were there in person or had to watch/listen online)?

[digging deeper]

Last Sunday it was said that the birth of John the Baptist is often a marginalized part of the Christmas story. Has that been your experience?

What is the significance of John's birth in the Christmas narrative as well as the birth and life of Christ?

Re-read the verses from the Gospel of Luke that recount John's birth: Luke 1:5-25; 57-80.

What is a word or verse that stands out to you and why?

For continued perspective, also read Matthew 3:1-6, Mark 1:1-3, John 1:19-28.

If you were to summarize God's purpose for John in one word based on these verses, what word comes to mind?

From this reading, as well as anything said from Sunday's message, think about the faithfulness of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

- How can we be encouraged by their example?
- What can we learn from their choices and experience?

How do you see the faithfulness of God demonstrated in these passages? (You may need to also visit Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 for more insight on this.)

John was a "forerunner" of Christ before His first coming. How is our role today as believers in Christ similar to John's?

How are you fulfilling that role in your life?

We were told Sunday that we can walk faithfully because God is faithful. What does that mean to you? (Think about your life, your marriage, your parenting, your job, your choices, your temptations, etc.)

[living it out]

We are going to close doubling up on an exercise from Sunday. Take a couple minutes privately to answer these questions (yes, the answers can be the same as Sunday's if you want!) Afterward, share the answers you feel comfortable sharing with your group. This will be more effective if you break into smaller groups of 2 or 3 people.

Inward Reflection

- One way I have seen God be faithful to me is _____.
- One area I still need to surrender and trust God to be faithful in (something maybe you're waiting on or feel forgotten in) is _____.
- One area God has given me the grace to be faithful in is _____.
- One area of my life I need God's help to be more faithful in (a sin or failure that you need and want purged from your life) is _____.

Outward Reflection

- One way I have been a good "forerunner" of Christ in my surrounding relationships and community is _____.
- One way I can increase my proclamation of Christ to those God has put in my life is _____.
- For Christmas Eve - a very effective time to invite people to church - who am I inviting? _____

[end with prayer]

Take at least 5-10 minutes in your smaller groups to convert these questions and their answers to a time of prayer together. Some will be "Thank You" prayers to God, some will be "Help me" prayers. To pray for those who you will invite to Christmas Eve services, you can use the following prayer as a guide:

Lord, I pray for _____. You know where they stand with you right now. You know what they need right now. I pray that if _____ doesn't know you as Savior, that you will draw them to Yourself and that they will come to believe in Jesus as Savior and experience the new life in Christ that You offer them. I also pray for them before inviting them to Christmas Eve. Would you please go before me and my invitation and prepare their heart? Please guide my words and my timing that this invitation will be received with the love and care that I offer it. I pray that they would respond well, and that You would use our conversation and this invitation to help them take a step toward belief in Jesus.