GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

* **What is something you waited a long time to do, such as leave home, get married, have a baby, or get your dream job?**
* **What was your greatest expectation for that event? Did the event live up to your expectation?**

**Main Point**

Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s saving promises and His presence prompts joyful praise from God’s people.

Ask a volunteer to read Luke 1:26-38,46-55.

* **Consider Mary's response to the announcement of the angel. How do you typically respond when called by God to something difficult? What might God be calling you to for His glory now? How do you need to respond?**
* **In Luke 1:48, Mary stated that her joy was rooted in God's favor toward her. In what ways are you favored and blessed in Jesus Christ? What difference should this make in your daily life?**

Knowing God’s purpose and submitting to that purpose are two different matters. Mary's response was forthright—she referred to herself as God’s servant, or slave. Mary expressed complete submission to God as His will for her life. Mary’s faith was a ready faith that not only accepted God’s will but agreed wholeheartedly with what God was about to accomplish.

Ask a volunteer to read Luke 2:8-20.

Jesus’ birth became a reason for celebration by the greatest and the least. By letting the shepherds know about the good news of Jesus’ birth and sending them to meet Him, God made it clear that no one was outside His love. The Messiah came for everyone.

* **The Shepherds left their sheep to go and see Jesus. What lesser things have you abandoned Christ in order to pursue? What else will people pursue and abandon everything for?**
* **After seeing Jesus, the shepherds spread the news and glorified God. How do you see these responses in your life? How can you stir up more of these responses?**

What the shepherds saw and heard from the angels spurred them into action. Their encounter with God’s presence demanded not only a response of praise and awe but also of obedience. They hurried off to find the Child. Nothing indicates they secured the sheep. The mission of an encounter with this Newborn demanded an urgent response.

Note the progression of discovery by the shepherds. They heard the good news (Luke 2:12); they set out in faith to confirm it (2:15); they saw it for themselves (2:15); they proclaimed it to others (2:17). For the first time after His birth, the good news of God in Christ was testified to by humans. The shepherds’ message amazed those who heard it.

**Application**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

* **What specific reasons do you have to praise Jesus today? How can you express this praise to God and to others?**
* **Why is Jesus’ birth good news for “all the people”? What is our church doing to help spread the news around the world? How can you help?**
* **In what ways should you anticipate Jesus' presence in your life daily?**
* **What does your enthusiasm to tell others about Jesus and what He’s done in your life say about your relationship with Him?**

**Pray**

Praise God for His promises in Christ and the presence of Christ made available to you. Invite Him to help you trust Him trust in His promises, rest in His presence, and voice His praise at every opportunity.