

DECEMBER 13 & 14

JESSE TINK, WATERLOO
CAMPUS PASTOR



HE ALWAYS
REQUIRES
RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION

This week in our series *The Watchmaker*, Pastor Jesse Tink talks about how God's message to us always requires a response. Just as God is always communicating with us, we are always communicating with Him. Our communications range from disbelief to joyous celebration. In Luke 1:5-18, Zechariah responded to God's message first in fear, then doubt and finally in faith in God's grace. This Christmas season, God desires us to respond to the message of His Son's birth as recorded in the Bible by eyewitnesses.

DISCUSSION

1. In Luke 1 and Acts 27:23, holy communication through an angel is prefaced with "Do not be afraid." Why were Zechariah, Mary and Paul afraid? Have you ever been in a situation when God's message, through His word, prayer, nature, etc. brought you fear? Why? How did you overcome that fear so you could hear God's message to you?
2. In Luke 1:18, Zechariah expresses His doubt about God's message to Him. Share a time when you doubted God. What did you do to overcome that doubt? How did situation affect your faith walk?
3. Read Hebrews 11:1. What does it mean to be "sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"? What does this kind of communication with God look like in our lives? How can we demonstrate this faith during the Christmas season?

THINK ABOUT IT

Even a devout God-follower like Zechariah had to walk through fear and doubt before he responded in faith to God's message to him through Gabriel. Many times, this is how we respond to God's message: first with fear - of the impact of the message on our lives, of the sacrifice it will take to follow what He wants us to do. Then we may begin to doubt whether we heard Him right or if it is possible to achieve what is asked. Yet, if we take the time to still our hearts and minds and listen carefully for His voice, through prayer, His Word and all the myriad other ways He communicates with us, we will have the faith and courage to follow through with the calling He has for us. This Christmas season, take that time to still your heart so you can listen to the Creator of your soul and respond to Him.

DO SOMETHING

1. Read through the stories of Jesus' birth as recorded in Luke and Matthew. Pray about how you can share this Good News of the Gospel with someone in your circle during the Christmas season.
2. If your small group hasn't planned any holiday activities, do it this week! Invite, include and bless people in your community.
3. Take time this week to still your heart and mind to listen to God's communication to you through practicing one or more of the spiritual disciplines - fasting, prayer, solitude, reading your Bible, etc.

