

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of December 26th, 2021

Sermon Series: Christmas at LifePoint Church

Sermon: Ready for a Fresh Start (Luke 9:23-26)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- How was your Christmas Day?

Conversation Starters and Sermon Review

I. Introduction

- Joshua 3:5 reads, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” To consecrate means to set yourself apart to the Lord, to be sanctified. How do you consecrate yourself now? What have you seen God do in your life because of your devotion?
- In your own words, why should we live consecrated lives? What about our world today makes it important?

II. Time for Change

- Read Luke 9:23-26. Why did Jesus direct the disciples to “take up his cross daily”? Why is that important? How do you take up your own cross each day?
- Where do you want God to have more of a presence in your life in 2022? Where do you want to see more of God in our world?
- What excites you the most about getting a fresh start with Jesus? What worries you about it?

III. What a Fresh Start Looks Like

1. *Fresh Devotional Life*
2. *Fresh Giving Habits*
3. *Fresh Start Servant*
4. *Fresh Heart for the House*

a. *Our church's seven core values: We Love God, We Love People, We Choose Joy, We Grow Intentionally, We Develop Leaders, We Pursue Excellence, We Give Generously*

- What are some spiritual disciplines that you want to either strengthen or implement in 2022? What are some habits you're going to try and break?
- Which core value are you going to choose to grow in and how?
- What other areas of your life do you feel the Holy Spirit calling you to renew?

Act On It

Encourage: Let's move away from New Year's resolutions rooted in things that are bound to fail and put our focus on getting a fresh start with Jesus, the One who never fails. If we will choose to set ourselves apart from the world and unto God, He will do things we could never begin to imagine. Let's start off the new year choosing to make changes that we know will bring us closer to Him in 2022. Move out of the gray area and into the presence of the Lord by diving into full devotion to Jesus. Our world needs a Church that's passionate, devoted, and on fire for the Lord. "Nothing will change unless something changes," so let's commit to being active and intentional about getting a fresh start with Christ.

Ask: Ask God to show you two or three areas in your life where you need a fresh start. Pray for a new mindset and a heart for change. Pray for strength and perseverance as you begin yourself apart from old habits and start leaning into the Lord. Pray to feel God's presence and assurance as you move into new spiritual disciplines. Repent for any past excuses and pray to accept His grace so you're free to embrace your fresh start.

Challenge: Come up with a realistic schedule for prayer in 2022. Utilize your smartphone for reminders and for resources, such as the Bible app. Pick out a brand new devotional for 2022. Attend our Next Steps class so you

can learn how you can start making a difference using your God-given talents. Share your plans with someone else in the group so you can have prayer, accountability, and encouragement during this time of renewal.

Prayer Request and Prayer

Lord, we're so thankful that you're a God who restores us and makes all things new. Thank you for always seeking a deeper relationship with us, and for the grace you extend to us so we can embrace that. God, as we move into this year, we're setting aside aimless resolutions that will ultimately fail because they're based on worldly things, and help us embrace this fresh start with You that we've been called to join. Move us as a Church to have a fresh start. We're setting ourselves apart. Reveal to us where we need to make changes. Bring us the direction, strength, perseverance, and peace that only You can bring. We pray for motivation to embrace this season of change and growth. Thank you that we can do this in community, that we don't have to struggle alone, but we can lean on each other as a group for support, accountability, encouragement, prayer, and celebration. We trust that You will do great things in us and through us in 2022, and we can't wait to see. We love you and we praise Your name, Amen.

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of December 19th, 2021

Sermon Series: Christmas at LifePoint Church

Sermon: Jesus Brings Hope in Hopeless Times (Luke 1:26-38)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- What is your earliest childhood Christmas memory?

Conversation Starters and Sermon Review

I. You Can Have Hope Because God Favors You (v. 28-30)

- The Greek word for favor is “charis,” which translates as the outpouring of God’s or a benefactor’s grace. How does this influence your understanding of this passage?
- What’s something that you currently have your hope in besides God? How has that dictated your mood, attitude, and/or peace?
- What do you think it was like for Mary to realize that she had been chosen by God to give birth to the Savior of the world? Can you imagine being favored by God for something as spectacular as this, despite your own commonness?
- What thoughts enter your mind when you hear that you’re favored by God? Refer back to the Greek definition of favor, do you think that you are or could be favored like Mary? Why or why not?
- What does “God is with you” mean to you? How do you picture that?
- What are some ways that you have been seeing God’s favor in your life?

II. We Have Hope When We Have Hard Times (v. 31-35)

- How do you stay hopeful in hard times? Does your hope stay anchored in Jesus or in the things of this world?
- How has God inserted Himself in your chaos?
- God is paying attention to you. How do you allow your heart to be

open enough to see God's hand in your life?

- Have you ever gone through a hard time and didn't see God's presence until after it was over? Please share.
- How do you encourage others to see God's movement in their lives when they don't recognize it?
- What do you have going on in life right now that you need to call a truce on? What do you think about the idea that even your worst enemy wants to have hope, wants to have peace, and wants to have things resolved?

III. Hope is Built on a Powerful God (v. 36-37)

- What was the significance of the angel telling Mary "your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren"?
- Describe a time when God did something that seemed impossible in your life.
- Do you actually believe that nothing is impossible for God? Why or why not?
- How do we bring our doubts and our questions to a powerful God?
- Where do you struggle to relinquish control and have full reliance on God's power? Where do you need God to be right now?

IV. Hope in God is Our Way of Life (v. 38)

- Where is your hope this Christmas?
- Luke 1:38: And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." and the angel departed from her. How do you typically respond to major, life-changing events?
- Read Acts 17:28. How is God influencing your life? How does it feel to be considered one of God's offspring?
- How do you share hope with those who are hopeless? How can you help God bring hope to the world?

- Mary was chosen by God to carry the person of Jesus, but we're called to carry the Spirit of the Living God. What do you do with that?

Act On It

Encourage: With so much happening in our world right now, let's be intentional this Christmas season in celebrating the hope that God gifts us with Jesus Christ. Jesus is the reason that we can have hope in the midst of a hopeless world. Placing our hope in Jesus allows us to anchor ourselves to something real instead of something that's fleeting. Regardless of what the world tells us, we all are favored by God. We can't earn it. Remember, you are favored by God to know Him and to have Him dwell in you. When we go through hard times, our hope shouldn't be anywhere else but in the One who brings abundant hope. Build your hope in God because with Him, there is nothing that is impossible. He is a powerful God with amazing power who has promised us eternal life. Hope in Him. Trust in Him. Place your confidence in Him. God sees us, He loves us, He knows us by name, He knows everything that happens around us. "If God is for us, then who can be against us?"

Ask: Pray for a new and biblical view about hope this week. Pray for your hope in Jesus to be reaffirmed. Pray for your trust and confidence in God to be strengthened. Ask to be shown what hope looks like in your life. Ask God to help you feel the favor He has on you. Ask for the strength to battle feelings of hopelessness. Pray for a desire to seek God like never before and for the pursuit of a biblical, beautiful relationship with Christ. Pray to find rest, peace, and comfort in knowing that nothing is beyond God's power.

Challenge: Who in your life can you bring hope to this week? Seek out ways, no matter how small, to spread hope this season. Offer to pray for someone this week. Figure out how to get involved with the tornado relief efforts in our community. Invite someone to your small group or church. Offer to take a task off of someone's plate. Complete one random act of

kindness, like buying someone a cup of coffee or holding the door for someone. Or, say something kind to a friend or coworker this week.

Prayer Request and Prayer

God, thank you for this Advent season. Thank you for reminding us about the real reason for the season. Thank you for bringing us back to the center of hope, peace, love, and joy. Thank you that in the midst of hopelessness, we have the ultimate anchor of hope in Jesus. Lord, thank you that there is nothing too big for you to handle. Thank you for the favor you pour upon us. Help us feel worthy and to accept the favor you have on our lives. Reignite our trust and confidence in You so that we can have hope in the hard times. Be the center of our hope, help us to completely and totally rely on Your name. Lord, we know the price to follow you is costly, and that's a cost we're willing to pay. Bring peace and comfort to us as we lean into your goodness above all. Interrupt our lives with something wonderful. We trust in you to work miracles, as you have done and as you will continue to do. Give us full confidence and dependence on You. Help us to place our hope and faith in the right place this week and forever more. Amen.