**“God with Us & Joy”**

**Going deeper in Luke 1:24-25 & 1:39-45**

**INTRODUCTION**

In the first passage Elizabeth has found out that she is pregnant and this is her reaction. In the second passage Mary has been told by the angel Gabriel that she will be pregnant with the Son of God and she immediately heads to tell Elizabeth.

**READ** – *Read (passage) aloud. Read it several times. Listen for what the Spirit of God is saying, don’t just think about it.*

Luke 1:24-25 – 24 After this Elizabeth became pregnant. She remained in seclusion for five months saying to herself, 25 “The Lord has done this for me. He has seen me and this is how He has taken away my disgrace.”

Luke 1:39-45 - 39 Mary didn’t waste any time and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. 40 She went straight to Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting the baby in her womb leaped. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and sang out exuberantly, “You’re so blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 So why am I so blessed that the mother of my Lord visits me? 44 The moment the sound of your greeting entered my ears the babe in my womb leaped for sheer joy. 45 Blessed is she who believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished.

**ENGAGE** – *Questions for going deeper. God is speaking… to you.*

1. In ancient Jewish culture having children was seen as a blessing from God. On the other hand, not being able to have children in that culture would have been a significant source of sorrow and shame. How does that help in understanding Elizabeth’s reaction to her supernatural pregnancy in Luke 1:24-25?

2. Have there been things in your life that have been a source of sorrow or even shame that the Lord has worked to redeem? Are there things in your life right now that you want Him to somehow redeem? He wants to hear about it from you.

3. In Luke 1:39-45 how do you think Mary felt when Elizabeth greeted her? How is Mary blessed and encouraged?

4. John the Baptizer leaps for joy while still in the womb. Why? What might that suggest about Jesus who is in the womb of Mary?

5. How has your journey with Jesus shaped your understanding and experience of joy?

**PRAY** – *God has spoken. So, reply.*

\*Praise the Lord for his faithfulness, goodness, and love

\*Thank the Lord for the ways that he has transformed some of the hard things in your life.

\*Ask the Lord to give you faith in the things that you don’t understand about your life.

**LIVE** – *This is where the rubber hits the road.*

In all circumstances the source of real joy is with you and at work in your life. How will that change how you live this week? How will you bring the God of joy into the lives of those you encounter this week?