

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Part 1: The Light of Renewed Hope

CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT EXPECTATIONS (HOPE)

- Some good, some not so good
 1. Good: Kids expecting presents
 2. Good: Getting together with friends and family
 3. Good: Christmas traditions that bring normalcy to our lives
- What about our expectations of God
 1. Good if we have an expectancy that He is engaged with us
 2. Not so good if we've allowed distractions and disappointment to dampen hope (***Psalm 27:13 NKJV***)

A HOPE RENEWED (Luke 1:11-14; 18-20 NKJV)

- Zacharias and Elizabeth were a solid couple before God
 1. The scriptures make a point that they were doing all they could do for God
- The big issue in their lives was having no child
 1. They had prayed about it
 2. They were past the point of expectation; They had not given up on God
- Zacharias rejected the good news
 1. The angel Gabriel gave him a promise from God
 2. But Zach had reasons (in his own mind to doubt)
- The real issue is that Zach chose not to believe
 1. Or God would have been unfair in making him mute for 9 months
 2. The silence was to help him not just punish him or prove a point
 3. Zacharias later chose to acknowledge that the child was from God

RENEWING HOPE DURING THIS SEASON

- Recognize the dampeners to your hope
 1. Many have not given up on God - but not expecting anything good from Him
 2. If you are expecting there is an excitement
- What promises are the good news in your life? (***2 Peter 1:4 NKJV***)
 1. What is causing you to rejoice?
 2. What has you excited?
 3. Promises of help, wisdom, strength, favor
- To renew our hope we strengthen our connection with the God of hope (***Romans 15:13 NKJV***)
 1. If hope seems distant at first, stay silent
 2. When you do speak - be positive about the promises