

BE A BRINGER

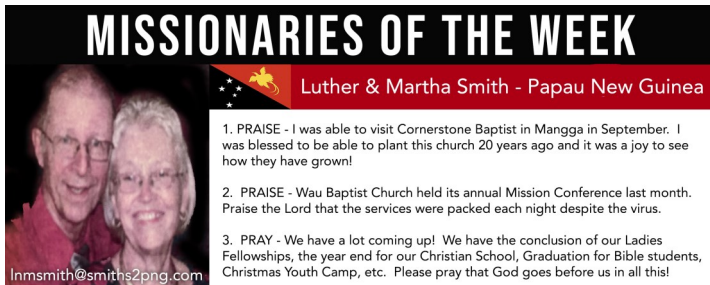
“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a



MISSIONARIES OF THE WEEK
Luther & Martha Smith - Papau New Guinea

1. PRAISE - I was able to visit Cornerstone Baptist in Mangga in September. I was blessed to be able to plant this church 20 years ago and it was a joy to see how they have grown!
2. PRAISE - Wau Baptist Church held its annual Mission Conference last month. Praise the Lord that the services were packed each night despite the virus.
3. PRAY - We have a lot coming up! We have the conclusion of our Ladies Fellowships, the year end for our Christian School, Graduation for Bible students, Christmas Youth Camp, etc. Please pray that God goes before us in all this!

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Handout: 11/29/20
Study: 12/0620

Finding Joy In Our Discouragement

We’ve made it! We’ve made it to the Christmas season! And wow, can we certainly use some Christmas! It’s been a year like no other, to put it mildly. Global pandemic, economic recession, mass unemployment, political division, cultural upheaval, racial reckoning, record wildfires, extra powerful hurricanes, devastating floods. Did I miss anything? Maybe whatever personal struggles you are facing are a result of those wide-scale events or completely unrelated. In whatever form they’ve come for you, the realities of life have been heavy and humbling. We have been aware of the darkness around us.

It’s the ideal setting for some light.
It’s just the kind of backdrop for a Savior to come.
It’s the perfect time to rediscover Christmas.

Because no matter how troubling the times, and no matter how heavy our hearts, there is good news. The greatest news!

Have you ever been to Yellowstone National Park? It’s an amazing place, filled with nature’s majesty. It’s also a unique place, basically sitting above a supervolcano beneath the earth’s surface. That’s where the park’s famous geysers come from. All that geothermal heat and combustion down there has to go somewhere, so it rises to the surface, escaping through vents we know as geysers. Some like Old Faithful spout water 180 feet into the air. Others heat large hot spring pools and churn up kaleidoscopic minerals. Others ooze out in slowly bubbling mudpots.

Joy is kind of like those geysers. It’s our feel-good emotion, and when it’s there, it’s going to find a way out. Sometimes it’s quick to burst out. Sometimes it takes a while to work its way through the mud in our lives. Sometimes it’s a combination of both. Maybe that’s the way it was for Mary and Elizabeth, two miraculous mothers-to-be in Luke’s Christmas account.

Both women were facing a mixture of emotions in their unexpected pregnancies. Behind Elizabeth’s elation were decades of shame, scorn, and crushed dreams of having children. Maybe that’s why she spent five months in seclusion. Behind Mary’s wonder were judgment and scorn from others, and certainly some fear and confusion of her own. Maybe that’s why Mary hurried to the hill country, away from the judgmental eyes of her neighbors.

But when the two women united, joy erupted. Elizabeth’s baby, John the Baptist, leaped in the womb. The Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth, and she joyfully blessed and affirmed Mary. Then Mary burst into song, praising God and rejoicing. All the fear, uncertainty, and pain faded in the face of encouragement and joy.

Source: “Rediscover Christmas: Good News In Troubling Times”

KEY VERSE

Luke 1:28 (NKJV)

“And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!””

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Luke 1:26-56

Introduction

1. What brings you the most joy at Christmas? What keeps you from experiencing joy?
2. What feelings do you think Mary experienced in our Scripture reading today? Which ones can you relate to?

Tuesday: Luke 1:26-33; I Peter 1:6-7; Isaiah 43:1-4

Expect The Unexpected

3. What was the news Mary received? What did the angel say about Jesus?
4. This year we have experienced a lot of unexpected things. What good things happened unexpectedly? What challenges? What can we learn from today's readings?

Wednesday: Luke 1:34-38; Psalm 40:8; Psalm 145:17

Surrender To God

5. What was Mary's response to the news she received from Gabriel?
6. How good are you at surrendering to God's will in your life? What is the relationship between joy and surrendering to God?

Thursday: Luke 1:39-45,56; II Corinthians 1:3-4

Seek Encouraging Support

7. What happened when Mary visited Elizabeth?
8. How did visiting Elizabeth likely help Mary? Who encourages and supports you?
9. Who in your life are you encouraging and supporting?

Friday: Luke 1:46-55; Psalm 103:1-2; Ephesians 5:20

Focus On The Positive

10. List some words or phrases that Mary describes the Lord in today's readings.
11. List some words or phrases that describe who God is and what He has done in your life.
12. How can Mary's example help us to have a more joyful Christmas?