

TREES LIGHTS
& PRESENCEDISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

- What are some things that make Christmas look like Christmas for you, but don't necessarily make you feel spiritually grounded?
- **The Gap Between Appearance and Substance.** Josh described the tension of feeling "Christmas-y" outwardly but thin inwardly. Where do you feel that gap this season?
- **The Spirit Comes Toward (Luke 1:35).** Mary wasn't seeking a spiritual moment; God moved toward her. Where in your life has God taken the first step toward you lately—even in a place you weren't looking?
- **Misunderstanding Spiritual Movement.** The sermon said we often think closeness with God is something we must manufacture. In what ways do you fall into that mindset?
- **"Overshadowing" as Presence, Not Pressure.** The Greek word **episkiasei** means a presence so real it changes the environment. Where might the Holy Spirit be "overshadowing" something in your life—pressing in with clarity, weight, or invitation?
- **Ordinary People, Sacred Moments.** Mary was completely ordinary, yet God chose her. What parts of your life feel "too ordinary" to imagine God doing something sacred in them?
- **Christ Being Formed in You.** The sermon emphasized that the Spirit doesn't just comfort—He forms. Where have you seen Christ being formed in you recently (patience, courage, compassion, steadiness, clarity), even in small ways?
- **Resistance vs. Openness.** What parts of your life are hardest to open to the Spirit's nearness—places where you'd prefer to stay in control or keep distance?
- **Responding Like Mary.** Mary's response wasn't performance-based but openness-based: "How will this be?" What would it look like for you to respond this way in your current circumstances?
- **Practicing Attention This Week.** Josh offered three ways to pay attention: noticing Spirit-initiated moments, allowing the Spirit to press on tender areas, and cooperating with Christ being formed. Which of these three practices do you want to intentionally lean into this week, and how?