

Growth Group Questions

First Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2023

Introduction

This is the first Sunday of the Church Year. Time for a spiritual New Year's resolution. What one aspect of your spiritual life do you want to focus on improving for the next week or month or year? Write it down and tape it to your bathroom mirror so you can see it every day!

Into the Word – Isaiah 64:1-9

1. What does verse two reveal as a reason for the Christian's eager anticipation for the Last Day? How is this different from seeking revenge?
2. What events might Isaiah have in mind when he talks about God's "awesome things we did not expect" and "mountains trembling"?
3. Explain what it means to say verses 6-7 are law and verses 8-9 are gospel. Why are both important to understand both God and how we can be saved?
4. Think of some different ways that God's relationship with us is like that of a potter and the clay he forms into shape.

Into the Word – 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

5. We are familiar with the first verse as a greeting pastors often use before their sermons. What is the relationship between grace and peace?
6. There are two subtle indications of Jesus as true God in verse 1. The first is the title "Lord." The Greek word for this ("kyrios") is the word Greeks used to translate the Hebrew "Yahweh." It is a name for God. The 2nd and stronger point is that the "from" is not repeated. Paul sees the Father and the Son as giving grace and peace equally.

7. The Greek word for grace is "charis" and the word for gifts is "charismata." What is the relationship between God's grace and the spiritual gifts he gives to us?
8. Is it arrogant to say that we will be found "blameless" on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ? Why might an unbeliever think so? How could you use this thought to share your faith?

Into the Word – Luke 10:25-37

9. You've likely heard this parable before. As you think about it or read it again, find one element of the parable you've never thought about before and share with the group.
10. What question is Jesus answering with this parable? What does that say about the point Jesus is making with this story?
11. Think of the geography of where Samaria is (between Galilee & Judea) and how it came to be (A mixture of Northern tribes and non-Jews after Assyrian defeat). Why did these two peoples hate each other so much? How does that strengthen Jesus' point?
12. Look at verses 34-35 and identify four ways that the Samaritan shows not just kindness, but personal and sacrificial kindness.



Closing Prayer

Lord, teach me to love every neighbor in life as I wait for you to come with healing and glory. Fill my heart with joy at my own forgiveness, that I might share grace and peace with everyone I meet. Amen.