

Growth Group Questions

First Sunday of Christmas, December 31st, 2023

Introduction

Think of times in your life when you received good news. Share this good news with the group and talk about how you shared it or treasured it. What does this remind us of as we consider God's Christmas gift to the world of Good News?

Into the Word – 1 Kings 8:6-13

1. At first this might seem an odd selection for a Christmas season reading. Can you think of why it might have been chosen? (**After thinking about it yourself, look at verse 10 and consider what was actually happening there and what happened at Christmas.**)
2. The Ark of the Covenant was the symbolic "place" of God's presence among the people of Israel. What separated this presence in the Most Holy Place from the rest of the temple? What happened to that divider at Jesus' death?
3. The beauty of Solomon's temple doesn't come up much in our worship readings. Take this chance to read 1 Kings 6 and note the time, materials, and care that went into its creation. Though we are free to worship in whatever place we want, what can we learn from Solomon's example?

Into the Word – Colossians 3:12-17

4. This is one of my favorite texts to use for wedding sermons. Choose some phrases from these verses and explain why they fit that marriage so well.
5. Why is love described in verse 14 as the quality to put "over" all the other virtues listed? What makes love such a special virtue?

6. Verses 15 & 16 describe the "body of Christ", the church. What responsibilities do we have toward each other?
7. Verse 17 reminds us that we serve God in whatever we are doing and whatever situation he's placed us into. Luther explained that the faithful Christian cobbler was one who made shoes well rather than one who put little crosses on every shoe. Explain Luther's reasoning.

Into the Word – Luke 2:22-40

8. Under the Mosaic law, sons had to be circumcised on the 8th day, when they were usually officially named. Jesus' naming is described in the verse before our text. Should Christian parents today have their sons circumcised or not?
9. Just as Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament Circumcision requirement for us, he was also dedicated in our place too. Think of some other times that Jesus lived perfectly under God's law in our place.
10. Why was Simeon joyful when the Spirit led him to Jesus? How are we in a similar situation?
11. How is Anna's quiet faithfulness an example to us today? What does it specifically say to those who endure trial, suffer, or loss?

Closing Prayer

Mighty Father in heaven, we thank you for the gift of your Son. Bless us to keep our Christmas joy burning throughout the year in our hearts and in our lives of faith. Give us the joy of Simeon and the peace of Anna as we live to serve you. Amen.

