

# **Growth Group Questions**

*11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, August 24, 2025*

## **Introduction**

There was once a time when the difference between Christian denominations was sharply felt. My parents' Catholic/Lutheran marriage was a big and controversial thing! Today, our culture minimizes the differences between not just Christian faiths, but all faiths. What's the problem with this so-called "universalist" point of view?

## **Into the Word** – Isaiah 66:18-24

1. All our Scripture readings this weekend point to the end of the world, and how God is the one who brings believers out of it and into heaven. How do you see that subtly taught in verse 18?
2. How did verses 19-21 happen in Jesus' time? How is it happening now?
3. Isaiah is a book of both warnings and promises. How does it end?
4. This section ends with a tragic note. Some today try to teach that there is no actual hell, or that suffering in it is only temporary and then the condemned simply cease to exist. What does verse 24 say to that thought?

## **Into the Word** – Hebrews 12:18-24

5. The author calls to mind the fire and storm and voice of God, but what does he say in verses 19-20 were the real reason Mt. Sinai was terrifying?
6. Mt. Sinai was a place of judgment and law. There was no joy in that mountain because of our sin. Why is Mt. Zion different?

7. At Mt. Sinai the Old Testament believers found a perfect God of judgment and law. On Mt. Zion New Testament believers find a perfect God of judgment and gospel. Explain how this can be the same God.
8. Explain the imagery of verse 23
  - The "church of the firstborn"
  - "names written in heaven"
9. Explain the blessing of verse 24
  - The "mediator of a new covenant" (See Jeremiah 31:31ff)
  - The "sprinkled blood" better than Abel

## **Into the Word** – Luke 13:22-30

1. What is the simple answer to the disciples' question in verse 23?
2. These words give me anxiety as a pastor and a believer. The idea of people believing they're saved but finding out at the end they are not is frightening. Why would Jesus say he doesn't know a Christian church member?
3. What does Jesus mean here when he says the last will be first and the first will be last?
4. Again, even in a section of clear teaching on judgment, what good news does Jesus teach in verse 29?

**Closing Prayer:** Mighty God, you are a being of perfect law and perfect love. Bless me to see you clearly in faith, that I might always look to you as my one way to an eternity in the joys of heaven. Thank you in Jesus. Amen.