

# Growth Group Questions

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany – January 25, 2026

## Introduction

The contrast between darkness and light is probably the most prominent picture used in the Epiphany season. Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. Either from the sermon or from your own thoughts, what are some things that bring darkness to our lives and in what ways does Jesus provide light against each of those things?

## Into the Word – Isaiah 8:19-9:4

1. This reading for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany used to just include Isaiah 9:1-4. Adding the verses before that prompts us to remember where truth is found though. What's the result for those who look for wisdom in any place other than God's instruction?
2. Isaiah prophesies about Zebulun and Naphtali. How many of the twelve tribes of Israel can you name? (You'll need to decide whether you're listing the 12 sons of Jacob or the 12 divisions of land in Israel. They're different!)
3. We probably know verses 6 and 7 from this chapter better than what's in our text. Look them up and then think about what they add to these words.
4. Explain the picture of the shattered yoke in verse 4. How does Jesus do that for every believer?

## Into the Word – 1 John 2:3-11

5. Why is it important for believers to "walk as Jesus did?" What does the way we live show?
6. What is old, and what is new, about the message John taught?

7. God says we can't look into the heart. Is it fair to look at people's lives to judge their faith? Why would we do it? Why do we do it always with humility?

8. What are some ways that we see spiritual blindness in people?

## Into the Word – Matthew 4:12-23

9. What change in ministry did John the Baptist's arrest bring to Israel? What did Jesus do when he heard that John had been arrested?
10. What two reasons did I give in the sermon that the land of Zebulun and Naphtali were considered a land of darkness?
11. Find the two times Jesus speaks in this reading. How do those timeless commands apply to you today?
12. Recall Luther's description of the cobbler's faithful service to God. Share one or two of your own "vocations" (roles in life) and how you might follow Jesus in those.
13. The Epiphany season is all about seeing who Jesus is. How does he show himself to be Lord and God in this part of Matthew's Gospel?
14. We live in a world darkened by sin, selfishness, and pride. We see that darkness spread out of sinful hearts onto our streets and into the public discourse. How do Christians respond to the darkness we see right now in our cities and our state? Why is that ultimately the only way things might get better?

**Closing Prayer** – Mighty God, send your love and protection over us and over all who look to you in a time of need. Bring us peace and light in Jesus. Bless us that we might be a blessing to others. Amen.