

CHRISTMAS FOR THE REST OF US

Week 2: Leaving Loneliness
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



RECAP

In the second sermon in this Christmas series, Josh looks at the Christmas story and helps us discover that the first Christmas wasn't peaceful and silent, where all was calm and all was bright. Instead, we discover that Joseph and Mary dealt with something that many of us still deal with today: loneliness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Josh started by talking about Christmas carols. Which Christmas carols are your favorite to sing? Why? Have you ever thought that some of the Christmas carols we sing may present a picture that is different than what the first Christmas was or what we experience today?
2. Josh told the story of a former church member (Anna) who struggled with loneliness on Christmas Day. Has Christmas ever been difficult for you or for someone close to you, either in the past or currently? What makes it so difficult?
3. Read Luke 2:4-7. Many times we try and over-glamorize the first Christmas into something that looks nothing like our everyday experience. In reality, the first Christmas was stressful and lonely. Talk through the different struggles went through that first Christmas (from stressful travel, paying a hated tax, being rejected by family, having to make do with less-than-ideal life situations, and loneliness) and discuss how it's mirrored your life at times.
4. God sent shepherds to celebrate with Mary and Joseph on that first Christmas night. Who have been some pivotal people that God has sent to challenge, encourage or lift you up at critical moments?
5. Josh discussed spiritual, relational and personal loneliness. Have you ever walked through those moments of loneliness and how did you leave that loneliness behind?

NEXT STEP

The BIG Idea for this week was to be a shepherd to someone this Christmas. As a group, discuss by name some people you can be a shepherd to this Christmas. Pray for them and share stories of celebration the next time you're together as a group.

For more information (training and support) on how to start and lead a small group, contact steve.lizzio@cbcva.org



CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2018
WEEK 2: LEAVING LONELINESS
LUKE 2:1-16

4 TYPES OF LONELINESS AT CHRISTMAS

1. _____ loneliness

Next Step: _____

2. _____ loneliness

Next Step: _____ at CBC

3. _____ loneliness

Next Step: _____

4. _____ loneliness

BIG Idea: Be a _____ to someone this Christmas.

Bonus Content

Sunday (This Handout) - 7 Questions Worksheet on Luke 2:10-11 and Small Group Questions for this week
Monday (Blog) - 4 Types of Loneliness People Experience at Christmas
Thursday (Blog) - Loneliness Was Present the First Christmas

For bonus content and much more, visit: joshdaffern.com

Luke 2:10-11

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But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.
Luke 2:10-11

1. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL READERS?

If you start with today you're twenty centuries too late.

Luke 2:10-11 describes the message the first evangelists give in the New Testament. The verb “bring you good news” is where we get our word “to evangelize” from. This good news is that the promised deliverer, conqueror, savior, Messiah, the one prophesied about for centuries in the Old Testament, had finally arrived! This news truly was good and was a cause for great joy, because the people of Israel had been subjected to political and military oppression for the last several centuries. At the time of the angel’s declaration, the Roman Empire had dominion over the people of Israel. Coupled along with this loss of political freedom was the deafening silence of God. Malachi was the final prophet to speak on behalf of God to His people in the Old Testament. In our Bibles there is usually a simple blank page between the last page in the Old Testament and the first page in the New Testament. In reality that blank page was 400 years of silence from God. In that time the desire for a deliverer (Messiah) grew stronger, yet the expectations changed. God’s plan all along was to send a spiritual savior for the world, but Israel wanted a political and military Messiah to kick out the Roman occupiers. Over the three years of Jesus’ ministry, the people of Israel would grow disillusioned with the Jesus because he was not the deliverer that they had hoped for. Jesus’ mission was far grander and would encompass not just the people of Israel, but the whole world.

GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

Χριστός (*Christos*) is translated into the English word Messiah in this verse and in other places it is transliterated (meaning the letters of the word are translated, not the meaning) into Christ. **Χριστός** literally means “anointed one” and was originally used as an adjective or description of Jesus, the Anointed One (or Messiah). Later, after his resurrection, this descriptive term became less of an adjective describing him and more of a noun and title for him: Jesus Christ. Jesus as **Χριστός** signifies our belief that he truly is divine, our savior, our Messiah, the Anointed One of God.

2. WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? *Scripture without context makes no sense.*

It’s worth noting the people to whom the angels came: shepherds. As a class shepherds had a bad reputation. The nature of their vocation kept them from observing the ceremonial law which meant so much to religious people. More regrettable was their unfortunate habit of confusing ‘mine’ with ‘thine’ as they moved about the country, having a reputation as thieves. They were considered unreliable and were not allowed to give testimony in the law-courts. They came from a despised class. Instead of announcing Jesus’ birth at the temple to the religious elite, God chose poor, lowly, despised shepherds. This would be a precursor of just how different this Messiah would truly be from what was expected by the people and the religious establishment of the day.

3. WHAT TIMELESS TRUTHS ARE THERE?

Since the Word doesn't change it still matters today.

- God is for us. In spite of our sin and ongoing rebellion, God provided for our salvation.
- God is faithful to His promises to us. His timing is usually not our timing, but God is always faithful to us.
- Jesus was the promised Messiah, Deliverer, Savior, Anointed One, not just for the people of Israel but ultimately for the entire world.
- Jesus is always Good News.

5. HOW DOES IT APPLY TODAY? *Information without application becomes stagnation.*

- We are called not to fear the spiritual world, although it is unseen and unknown.
- If we keep the Good News of Jesus’ death and resurrection to ourselves, we are missing the whole point of what he did. The Good News of Jesus is meant to be shared.
- Jesus is both Messiah and Lord. He is our Deliverer and Savior, but He is also our Ruler. A decision to follow Jesus is not a momentary act of forgiveness but a lifelong posture of surrender and allegiance to Jesus.

4. WHERE ELSE IN SCRIPTURE DOES IT SAY THIS? *The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.*

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The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. *Luke 1:19*

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.” *Luke 4:18*

And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” *Romans 10:15*

6. HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE THE WAY I LIVE IN COMMUNITY? *The Bible comes alive in me when I live it in community.*

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- Talk about a time when you heard some truly “good news” (most likely a celebratory life event). What was it that made the news so “good”? How natural was it for you to share that good news with others?
- Why do you think the majority of Christians have never shared the Good News of Jesus with someone else? If it’s truly Good News, what is holding us back from sharing it with everyone we encounter?

7. HOW CAN MY LIFE GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THESE VERSES? *If I trust God and step in faith, what kind of life will God create?*

What if we lived, breathed, spoke and rejoiced on a daily basis because of the Good News that Jesus came to take away our sins and redeem us? What if, rather than focusing on the small minor inconveniences that can leech away our joy, we kept the wondrous work of the cross front and center? What if our lives radiated an irresistible joy because we are right with God through Jesus and our eternal destiny is secure? What if we had a rock solid happiness that did not change like shifting shadows? What if this infectious joy brimmed over from our lives into the lives of every person we encountered? What if we lived everyday like the Good News of Jesus’ birth, death and resurrection was truly Good News?