

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Jan 6, 2019



Pastor Hook 8:15, 9:30 Pastor Hall 10:55

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Happy New year everyone! As we begin a new year together, are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Opener: An Epiphany is a sudden insight or revelation. In Christian terms, an epiphany is centered in God's presence or revelation. Is there a new insight about faith or your life that you believe God has inspired in you since the group last met which you would like to share about?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture below, Isaiah 60:1-7, and discuss the following questions. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. ²See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴“Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. ⁵Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy;

the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. ⁶Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. ⁷All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- Like classical paintings of light penetrating dark clouds, Isaiah's words envision the light of God penetrating the darkness of the world. What signs of Hope do you see present in these verses?
- What are the geographical bounds of the people who are responding to the Lord?
- What causes them to come?
- These verses in Isaiah were written several hundred years prior to the birth of Christ. What details in them direct your attention to the birth narratives of Jesus?

Another Related Scripture (10 min)

- Would a volunteer please read aloud Matthew 2:1-12.
- What might have been the background of the magi or wisemen, given they were coming from a territory far east of Israel?
- How did their "epiphanies" come to them?
- What measures of faith were demonstrated in their journey?
- How might faithful Christian responses to God be similar to the example of the magi?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional scripture above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- When was your first "light bulb moment" with the Lord and what prompted you to come to Him at first?
- How has the light of Christ brought hope into a situation for you that initially seemed very dark at first?
- How do epiphanies lead us to more than just knowledge?
- How has the C.S. Lewis quote "hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny" proven true in your life or those whom you know?

Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)

- How might God be calling us to be bearers and sharers of the His light for others this week?
- In what ways do you see the light of Christ being shared from other members in the group or from Christ Church as a whole?
- Is there someone whom God is calling you to invite to church or small group next week at the beginning of this new year?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.