

A BETTER GIFT



SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

EAST ABBOTSFORD CAMPUS

DECEMBER 8, 2019

INFO AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Online giving is now available! Visit northview.org and click "Give".
- Christmas Comedy Night: Laughing All The Way tickets are on sale now! Tickets can be purchased online at northview.org/comedy-night
- The East Abbotsford Campus is hosting our 2nd annual Neighbourhood Christmas Party! **Sunday, December 15, 4:00-7:00pm**. There will be crafts for kids, snacks for all, a Christmas Light Tour (on our shuttle bus), and more! Invite your friends and neighbours!
- Sign up for Northview's Newsletter at northview.org to keep up to date on all events, courses, and ministries.
- Northview is running many different courses this winter. Those include:
DivorceCare / DivorceCare 4 Kids: 13wk seminar starting January 14
More information and to register see: northview.org/courses

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Please pray for all pastors and staff as the new ministry year begins!
- Please pray for all the community group leaders and Bible study leaders, and also the Divorce care, Divorce Care for Kids, Grief share and Resolving Everyday conflict leaders as these courses begin.

LEADER NOTES

Suggested Timing for a 2 hour meeting:

Connection: 30 Minutes (visiting / snacks / announcements / ice breakers)

Content: 30 Minutes (Observation and Interpretation questions):

Commission: 10-15 minutes (Application questions)

Care: 15-30 minutes (Sharing and Prayer) **Connection:** 15-30 minutes (visiting / snacks)

LEADING SERMON-BASED DISCUSSIONS:

- Read the scripture passage(s) together as a group.
- Direct people back to the text if they are going on rabbit trails or talking about opinions and speculation, by asking, "Where do you see that in the text? What answer does the text provide for that question?"
- As you transition to prayer time, pray through the issues and ideas that the text brought up.

A BETTER GIFT SERMON SERIES

In this series, we will be looking at the gifts God has given us through Jesus Christ: a better hope, a better peace, a better joy, and a better love.

Advent Resources:

Hidden Christmas by Tim Keller

Heart of Christmas by Hank Hanegraaff

Indestructible Joy by John Piper

(online PDF: desiringgod.org/books/the-dawning-of-indestructible-joy)

Advent 2019 by Radical

(online PDF: radical.net/book/advent-2019)

Advent Devotions Book by MB Seminary

(online PDF: mbseminary.ca/advent2019)

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Observation

This section is aimed at helping people observe the details of the text: what is written, what words or ideas are repeated and emphasized, the text's structure and how this text fits into the wider context of the book of Romans.

1. Read James 4:1-6.

a. What stands out to you from this passage?

- *Fights & quarrels arise from evil desires within us (v.1)*
- *Extreme language being used here (kill / covet / quarrel / fight) (v.2)*
- *Called adulterous people (v.4)*
- *Can't be friend of the world & friend of God (v.4)*

b. Who is experiencing conflict according to this passage? What 'groups' are at war with each other?

- *Horizontally (among people)*
- *Vertically (between people & God)*

c. According to this passage, why is there not peace between people and other people?

- *Because of our evil desires - we want what we cannot get (v.1)*
- *Because we don't ask God for things but try to take them from others (v.2)*
- *Because we have wrong motives when we ask - want to serve ourselves (v.3)*

d. Why is there not peace between people and God?

Because we want to be friends with the world. We want the "stuff" of the world more than we want God (v.4)

e. What are the two "relationship options" between people and God?

Friend of God or enemy of God

2. Read James 4:7-12.

a. What solution does this passage offer for making peace with God?

- *Submit yourself to God (v.7)*
- *Come near, wash your hands, purify your hearts (v.8)*
- *Humble yourselves (v.10)*

b. What about making peace with each other?

- *Don't slander or judge your neighbor (v.11,12)*

Interpretation

This section is aimed at linking the current text to other texts or to the bigger biblical narrative. If you are running out of time, feel free to skip this section.

1. Read Colossians 1:21-23.

a. What is the natural state of people?

Alienated from God / enemies in your minds (v.21)

b. What has God done to make peace with mankind?

Reconciled you through Christ's physical body (v.22)

c. How does God view us as a result of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf?

Holy, without blemish and free from accusation? (v.22)

Do you believe this is true about you? Do you picture yourself as holy, without blemish, and free from accusation in God's sight? Which of these 3 are the most difficult for you to believe? Why?

Various answers

Application

This section is aimed at helping people apply what we have read in the text to our lives. It is intended to foster more open-ended discussion as people connect the text to their everyday life, and reflect on how it changes the way they think and act.

1. Read Matthew 14:22-33.

a. List all the things which threatened the peace of the disciples in this passage.

- *Far away from land (v.24)*
- *Wind was against them (v.24)*
- *Saw Jesus walking on water - thought he was a ghost (v.25-26)*
- *Peter - saw the wind and began to sink - took eyes off Jesus (v.30)*

b. What does Jesus do or say to bring them peace?

- *"Take courage - it is I, don't be afraid" (v.27)*
- *Reaches out his hand & catches Peter when he starts sinking (v.31)*

c. What waves and storms are threatening your peace right now?

Various Answers

d. How can you keep your eyes on Jesus in the midst of the waves and storms you are experiencing?

How can we pray for you?

Various Answers