



Discussion Questions

Advent Week 2

Sermon: What to Expect When You're Expecting

- ❖ **Expect to Be Tested**
 - Trials and suffering purify those who wait on the Lord. (Rom. 5:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:6-7)
 - **Question:** Where can you identify God's purifying work in the difficult circumstances of life?
- ❖ **Expect to Grow in Grace**
 - God's people grow while they wait through regular rhythms of worship and remembering God's story. (Deut. 6:20-25; Luke 2:25-38)
 - **Question:** Have you committed to spiritual growth even while God's promises feel delayed? What worship rhythms or discipleship practices do you need to start or re-start?
- ❖ **Expect the Unexpected**
 - Our deliverance does not always look like the victory we envision. (Isaiah 53; Micah 5:2-4)
 - **Question:** Have you surrendered your vision to His good purposes for your life?
- ❖ **Bottom Line: In our expectant waiting, our gift is His presence.**

Understanding Scripture

1. **Read the passage aloud.**
 - **Question:** How would the original audience have understood this passage?
 - **Question:** What was God's desire for them?
2. **Reread key verse(s) aloud.**
 - **Question:** What does this teach us about the human soul, desires, or behavior?
 - **Question:** What does this teach us about the nature, desires, or behavior of God?
3. **Ask if anything is difficult to understand in the passage, or simply point it out yourself.**
 - i. Back up from the confusing verse and reread the whole section slowly—highlight the author's flow of thought.
 - ii. Ask everyone, "What are some possible interpretations?" Encourage curiosity!
 - iii. If needed, provide clarification, but admit if you don't have a satisfactory explanation, and volunteer to research answers. Share your findings over text or at the next meeting.
4. **Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences to refocus the group ("Okay, so far we've seen in this Advent series...")**
 - **Question:** What does this say about our relationship with God and/or each other?
 - **Question:** How do the teachings, actions, or person of Jesus shed light on this passage?

Applying Scripture

5. **Allow free-flowing discussion, incorporating questions focused on heart and habit transformation.**
 - **Deuteronomy 6:20-25; Micah 5:2-4** | How do these passages show us God is always active, even when it feels dark and quiet? When have you wrestled with God feeling distant or delayed in His timing? What did that wrestling expose?
 - **Romans 5:3-5; 1 Peter 1:6** | What does it mean to be "tested"? What makes being tested a normal part of Christian discipleship? How do testing and trials purify our faith and trust in God, rather than destroy it?
 - **Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Luke 2:25-38** | What does it look like to actively grow in the waiting rather than just passively waiting? How can we all better grow in grace during difficult seasons, rather than grow in hardness and impatience?
 - **Isaiah 53** | How does Advent teach us to "expect the unexpected" from God? Why did so many miss or misunderstand Jesus at His first coming? In what ways do you see this still happening today?
 - **Isaiah 53** | How does the way Jesus submitted challenge you? What expectations or personal plans do you struggle to give up to God's timing and wisdom? Who can you share these struggles with and pray with for discernment and boldness in these areas of your life?
 - **Application** | What disciplines can you begin or continue in your life that will help keep you actively waiting on the Lord this week? Who can help hold you accountable to practicing these disciplines? Where is the Holy Spirit challenging you to let go of control? When will you intentionally set aside time this week for prayer or fasting as a way to pursue obedience and submission to the Lord?