



Light of the World

Part 2: Light of the World

Stephanie Bartsch – December 11, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Maybe you wandered away from the church. Maybe the church pushed you away. You lost interest. You got busy. You got hurt. You thought you were done with God forever. But then you started to miss the peace. Despite everything you had experienced, you sensed a light out there. The doubt, the anger, the disappointment with God, the sin, and the shame didn't put out the light. And here you are in church again. How did that happen?

HANG OUT (warming up to the topic)

1. Check in to see how everyone's week was.
2. Take time to review this week's teaching and discuss your reactions. Talk about what most challenged, puzzled, and encouraged you.

HEAR (listening to God through Scripture)

3. What are some ways you connect with your heavenly Father during the Christmas season? Why are those ways helpful for you?
4. What are some things that cause people to drift away from God and the church?
 - a. Talk about a time when you felt distant from God. What were some of the factors that caused you to feel disconnected?
5. Turn to the Book of **Matthew** and review the **Nativity Story**
 - a. Stephanie mentioned that there was a little bit of each character in us, even Herod. In what ways are you tempted to focus on building your own kingdom like Herod, instead of participating in God's kingdom?
 - b. In what ways do you relate to other characters in the story: The Shepherds, The Inn Keeper, the Magi...
 - c. In what ways can you "let the light in" this Christmas season? Are you open to the light not just sitting in a corner (the inn keeper), but transforming your whole life?

HUDDLE (making it personal and praying together)

6. What are some obstacles to you fully surrendering to Jesus? What would it take for you to overcome those obstacles?
7. What is one thing you can do this week to engage or reengage with Jesus? What can this group do to support you?

MOVING FORWARD

What will your story be in relation to the light of the world? Do you want to build your kingdom or participate in God's kingdom? Do you want to cling to what you can't keep or surrender what wasn't yours to begin with? Do you want your way or his way. There is good news: the darkness has not put out the light of life in you. Take a step to reengage or engage for the first time with the light of the world.