

Good News, Great Joy, All People
“Good News for Outsiders”
Growth Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion):

- ❖ Is there some group or organization where you feel like an “insider?” What does it feel like? Or, if not, is there some group or organization where you would like to be an “insider?”
- ❖ Begin your time together with a moment of silence, then pray and ask for God’s Spirit to reveal himself through his word.

1. **Read Luke 4:14-22.** As you read, try to put yourself in the shoes of a non-Jewish person who has heard of Jesus, and met a few Christians, but is hearing/reading these words for the very first time. What questions arise in your mind? What would initially strike you about Jesus?

- Now read Isaiah 61:1-2. The speaker in these verses is the Servant of the Lord (the Messiah).
 - What differences do you note between the Servant’s original words, in Isaiah, and the words of Jesus? Why do you think there are differences?
 - Jesus specifically leaves out the phrase, “the day of vengeance of our God.” Why do you think he does this?
- Linguistic scholars tell us that in Jesus’ words in Luke 4, the phrase in v. 18, “he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor” is the controlling phrase of the whole paragraph—in other words, the remainder of v. 18 and 19 expound on this phrase.
 - Why do think that Jesus would use this phrase, “proclaim good news to the poor,” as *the banner* to describe his whole ministry?
 - On Sunday, Pastor Josh shared this explanation from New Testament scholar, Joel Green: “It is thus evident that Jesus’ mission is directed to the poor—defined not merely in ... economic terms, but in the holistic sense of those who are for any of a number of socio-religious reasons relegated to positions *outside the boundaries* of God’s people.” In other words, Jesus came to bring good news for “the outsiders!” **Jesus came to make outsiders, insiders with God.**
 - In the time and place where we live, who do you think would fit into the category of “outsider?” What might Jesus’ news mean for them?
- How do you feel about notion that none of us can “buy” our way into insider status with God, through good works, or accomplishments, or anything else?

2. **On Sunday, Pastor Josh took some time to explain the other phrases Jesus used to describe his “good news” ministry (vv. 18-19).** Each phrase is below. Discuss as prompted.

- *Proclaim freedom for the prisoners.*
 - Are there any “prisons” from which Jesus has set you free?
 - Are there currently any chains from which you are hoping he will free you? Invite the group to pray with you about these things.
- *[Proclaim] recovery of sight for the blind.*
 - In what way has Jesus opened your spiritual eyes?
- *Set the oppressed free.*
 - How can Jesus’ good news bring an end to literal oppression in the world?
 - How has he set you free from oppression?
- *Proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor* (i.e., the Year of Jubilee).
 - The Year of Jubilee was intended to function as a great reset—bringing rest, restoration of property, and release from debt. In what way has the gospel of Jesus brought you these things?

3. **Read Luke 4:23-30.**

- Jesus’ claim in v. 21 demanded a response. And yet in these verses, he indicates what kind of response he expects the Nazarenes to give him.
 - Why do you think Jesus re-hashes these two stories from the ministries of Elijah and Elisha?
 - Why do the people of Nazareth try to kill Jesus at this point?
- Jesus is basically telling his own townspeople that because they don’t believe he is the Son of God, they are “outsiders,” while people they consider “outsiders” will be “insiders” with God. How do you feel about what he does here?
- The big idea of this week’s sermon was that **Jesus, although he was the ultimate insider, became an outsider to make you an insider with God.**
 - Do you agree with this claim?
 - How does it make you feel about Jesus?
 - What kind of response do you think this truth demands from you this week?

Prayer:

- Pray about any needs or insights that have come up through the discussion.
- Take a moment to share, and pray for any other needs that exist among your group members.