

1st Sunday of Advent: Isa. 40:1-11, Mk. 1:1-3

CG Discussion Guide// Week of November 27, 2022

INTRODUCTION:

- Icebreaker: What was one Christmas gift you still fondly remember to this day?
- Take some time to pray for one another's needs and requests (refer to Prayer Guide as needed)
- Harbor Network sister church to pray for: Soma Church Midtown (Pastor: Brandon Shields)
- Choose discussion questions, prayer guide, or abide time questions depending on your group's needs

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Isa. 40:1-2:
 - Please share some of the greatest comforts that the Lord has given you as you have walked with Him.
- Isa. 40:3-5:
 - Judging from the imagery (highways and paths in the wilderness and desert, filling up of valleys, flattening of mountains, etc.), how ought the glory of God be seen by people, and why?
- Isa. 40:6-8:
 - How does it help us to remember both our mortality and the eternal nature of God's Word? How does that give us hope and joy?
- Isa. 40:9-11:
 - How is God described in this passage? How does this imagery inform how we interact with, and trust in Him?
- Mk. 1:1-3: We see here that Isaiah prophesied about the person and work of John the Baptist, and ultimately, both Isaiah and John the Baptist prophesy about the coming of the Lord, who is Jesus Christ.
 - How does Jesus Christ fulfill Isa. 40:9-11? How does that help you to understand and trust in Jesus more and help others to do the same?

Abide Time: Isa. 40:1-11; Mk. 1:1-3

- What realities are you facing this week? What is occupying your thoughts? How do you feel?

- Read the passage and let God speak to you in you reality through his Word. Write down your reflections as God shepherds you:
 - What does the text say is true about God and his character?

 - What does it say about the world around you?

- How do your reflections above speak to your reality?

- What did you experience in your heart and soul as God spoke to you and your reality?

- What did you experience in your body, given your reflections and what you experienced in your heart and soul?

- How is God inviting you to live differently?

- What does all of what you shared above say about God and his relationship with you?

WEEKLY PRAYER GUIDE

The Bible promises that anything we ask for in Jesus' name – that is according to His will – shall be granted to us (John 14:13-14). In view of this great promise, the prayer requests are all grounded in Scripture. When we pray Scripture, we can be certain that we are praying according to God's will.

That does not mean God will grant our requests in our preferred time or according to our frail wisdom; but it does mean that we can pray confidently knowing that God delights to answer these requests, for they are His words.

Use the accompanying Scripture verses to shape and inform your prayers.

PRAY FOR YOURSELF & YOUR FAMILY:

- That your daily life will bring honor to the name of Jesus – (2 Thess. 1:11-12)
- That you will cast all of your anxieties on God – (1 Peter 5:6-7)
- That you will consider your trials as an opportunity for joy – (James 1:2-4)

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH:

- That the power of Christ will rest on our church and ministries [Worship Gathering, Community Groups, Men/Women, Youth, Children, etc.] – (2 Cor. 12:9-10)
- That God will give us the wisdom and faith that we desperately need to continue in faithful mission – (James 1:5-8)
- That God will make us fruitful in ministry – (John 15:1-2) – and bold in witness – (Eph. 6:18-20)

PRAY FOR OUR CITY:

- That God will give wisdom to our government (local, state, and national) that we may lead peaceful, godly lives – (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
- That the Lord will continue to provide open doors of gospel ministry in IU and the Bloomington community– (1 Corinthians 16:9)
- That the work of God will be displayed in the lives of the members of our sister churches – (John 9:3)

PRAY FOR OUR WORLD:

- That the persecuted church will find fellowship with Jesus as they share in his sufferings – (Philippians 3:10-11)
- That the Lord of the harvest will send out more workers to unreached people groups because they have been gripped by Paul's missionary logic in Romans 10:13-17 – (Matthew 9:37-38)
- That Christ will return bringing the fullness of salvation with him – (Revelation 22:20)

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- December 3: Membership Class
- December 4: Nine Lessons and Carols
- December 24: Christmas Eve Service
- December 25: CHRISTMAS DAY!
- Dec. 11-Jan. 8: CG Break

Reminder: All events are listed in the Events tab in our Redeemer app. You can RSVP for specific events by going to the Events tab, clicking on an event, and following the link to register.