

Seedling Group Questions for the sermon on January 5 – The Second Sunday of Christmas

The sermon for January 5, “The Nativity of all Nativities,” can be found at www.saidanotherway.org

Questions for opening up

If you could learn any language to fluency, which one would it be? Why?

Of the three scriptural birth narratives (Matthew, Luke, John), which one is your favorite? Why?

Read Jeremiah 31:7-14

How would you describe the tone of this prophecy? What is happening in the text? What lines reach out to you and why?

Why does Jeremiah’s prophecy specifically mention “*the blind and the lame, those with child, and those in labor, together*”? What do all of those people have in common?

This particular scripture is always read on the second Sunday of Christmas. What about it makes it an appropriate lesson for Christmastime?

Read John 1:1-18

What do you think it means that “*all things came into being through him (Jesus)*”? Why would the gospel writer emphasize this?

What about Jesus’ life is key to understanding what the Father is like? Can you name three actions (verbs) or characteristics (adjectives) that you would lift up?

In what ways does the world not know Jesus or accept him?

Putting things together

What affect does the presence of persons like “*the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor*” have on God’s gathered community? How do you see this at work in the congregations or ministries you’ve been a part of?

Pastor Phillip says, “[*God’s becoming flesh in Jesus*] rearranges our understanding about God and what God is like but it also rearranges our relationships with one another.” In what ways have your relationships and your understanding of human community been “rearranged” by your faith in Jesus?

Making it personal

Where have you seen the light of Christ not be overcome by darkness?

How is reading and learning about God’s love in Jesus enhanced by physically gathering with other believers? Can you give an example from your own life?

Jeremiah 31:7-14

⁷Thus says the Lord:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O Lord, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”

¹¹For the Lord has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.

¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
says the Lord.

John 1:1-18

[¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to

the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.