



Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE
for the sermon preached on December 26, 2021
"Twas the Day after Christmas"—Luke 2:25-35



Christmas means we are LOVED, in all the fullness of that word. Each week of Advent we've been exploring what being loved actually means. It means being seen and heard. It means being chosen for a purpose. It means belonging to Someone and something greater than ourselves. It means the freedom to become our truest and best selves. This Sunday, Pastor Jon helps us think about how we can respond to that love.

Group Discussion Questions

Q – Pastor Jon started by talking about how, both in his own experience and statistically, people seem to be more generous, loving, and kind during the holidays.

- How have you found this to be true in your own experience? Where have you seen the holiday season inspiring others around you to be kinder, more loving, and more generous than usual? In what concrete ways has the Christmas spirit inspired *you* to be kinder, more loving, and more generous than usual?

Q – Invite a member of the group to read Luke 2:25 aloud: "Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him."

- In your own words, what is Luke telling us about Simeon? What kind of person was he?
- Do you know someone like Simeon, who seems to have "the Holy Spirit on" them? Share a little bit about that person, about what makes them seem special.

Q – Have someone continue reading, from verse 26 to 32:

²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."

- What is Simeon saying here about God's salvation? Who are the two groups of people he mentions in v. 32? What is God revealing about Jesus through Simeon?

Q – Reflecting on these verses, Pastor Jon talked about who God loves, and therefore, who we as God's people are called to love. He said: "Simeon teaches us that the story of Christmas isn't just about **me**—and how Jesus loves **me**—which is important. But also, how Jesus loves the people who are not like me. And specifically, the person who is racially, ethnically, and culturally different from me."

- What are some examples we see in the world around us of the consequences of people finding it hard to love those who are different from them?
- How can we as Christians do more to love those who are different from us?

Q – Jon ended his sermon with a reflection on 1 John 3:16; 4:19: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. . . . We love because He first loved us." He invited us to respond to three questions:

- Who can I love today?
- How can I love that person today?
- What gifts has God given me that I can use to love and serve others?

Take some time for each member of the group to answer those questions, and then pray for one another, that God will give each of you grace and strength to respond to the gift of Christmas by loving others well.

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.

- Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team.