



Small Group Study Guide for December 4, 2022

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: Do you crave “more”? The world says that we need more stuff – get more, spend more, have more. Jesus teaches us that we find “more” in Him, and that we can loosen our grip on the things of this world. Advent means being counter-cultural and not getting caught up in the frenzy of “more” worldly things. We find our “more” in Christ!

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

1. Are you able to participate in either Advent by Candlelight, Advent by Bonfire, or the Living Nativity this year? If so, are you volunteering or bringing anyone?
2. What is “materialism” and how does our society promote it (especially during the holidays)?

In the Word: Read Luke 3:1-9

3. Luke, as a historian, gives a detailed description of the time when John the Baptizer began his ministry. What was the heart of John’s message (verse 3)?
4. It sounds like a lot of people went to see John and hear his preaching (“the crowds” in vs 7, “people from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan” in Matt 3:5). What do you think drew all the crowds to John, and is there anything we could compare it to today?
5. John doesn’t seem to woo the crowds or flatter them or entertain them in any way. He speaks sharply and critically. “You brood of vipers!” What words or phrases does John use to preach the Law to the people in verses 7-9? (What words or phrases speak of God’s just judgement?)

Read Luke 3:10-18

6. Many people respond with repentance and ask the question, "What should we do?" List out the three specific examples of repentant living that John gives to the crowd in general and to two specific groups.

7. When people thought John might be the Christ (Messiah), he told them that the Christ/Messiah was yet to come, and that he would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The Holy Spirit refers to Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit in Baptism (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:38). The fire refers to the judgement of verse 17. Luke summarizes John's Law & Gospel preaching in verse 18. Which phrase relates to the "Law" and which phrase relates to the "Gospel"? Mark these in your Bible.

Putting it all Together (what we should believe or do as disciples)

8. John preached a stern Law and life-changing Gospel. Why is it important to preach both the Law and the Gospel and keep these together? What does it look like if we preach only the Law, or only the Gospel?

9. Review the list of ways John urged repentant living in question #6. What other ways would you add to that list that demonstrate a repentant life?

10. How does John's preaching (especially in the season of Advent) call us to "Spend Less" as Christians who go against the grain and resist the materialism of our age? What does that have to do with following Jesus?

Take prayer requests from your group.

Prayer: Ask God to work repentance and faith in our hearts this Advent Season. Pray that Christians may share both the Law and Gospel faithfully and boldly in our age. Praise God for His gifts of grace, and ask for the Holy Spirit to work through us in repentant living.

Next Week: Christians are the most generous people in the world, and especially around Christmas, we reflect the God who "gave His only Son" by sharing with those in need. Spending Less allows us to "Give More" and make a difference for the Kingdom of God with our time, talents, and treasure.

Note: The school Christmas programs are on Thursday evenings this year, instead of Wednesdays! We are changing it up a bit. It is wonderful to hear our students sing God's praises.