

Preparing for Arrival

December 9, 2012

LUKE 3:1-20

Vol. 2 Num. 49

Core Competency:

Peace- I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate really matter, so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

❸ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

Introduction

The nation of Israel had not known real peace with God or each other since the glorious days of King Solomon. God promised that a Messiah would come that would bring peace between Israel and their God, and what a world it was!

The world was in a state of extraordinary moral degeneration. Two thousand lords in Rome had 1,300,000 slaves, which were treated with great cruelty. In the Empire there were 6,000,000 slaves. The rich lived in the utmost profligacy.

Chastity and marriage were the exception while divorce and immorality were the rule. The priest preyed upon the masses of the ignorant. Many seductive cults exerted a degrading influence. The religion of the Romans had no power to cope with the degeneracy of the times. The philosophies of the Greeks failed. None of the philosophies could meet the deep moral need of the times. The Emperors were monsters of crime. Thousands of lives were sacrificed in the arena to furnish entertainment for the Emperor and a bloodthirsty population. Luxury was beyond description. The horrible character of vice and crime is witnessed by the excavations of Pompeii. Seneca testified that children were considered the great disfavor and infant exposure was prevalent. Tacitus said that the spirit of the times was "to corrupt and be corrupted."

Paul gives a picture in the Roman epistle of a people who had departed from the God revealed in nature and conscience, to set up for themselves, through vain independence, gods like many creatures. From this idol worship they had gone into moral degeneracy and crime until they were lost in a world of darkness and destruction.

This Week

This was the condition of the world morally when Jesus came, who was "to overcome the world" with His Gospel. Learn this week the call of God on the people who would receive Him.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate really matter, so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

Read Luke 3:1-20

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,

2 in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;

4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT. 5 ‘EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH; 6 AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.’ ”

7 So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

8 “Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father,’ for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

9 “Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying,

“Then what shall we do?”

11 And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.”

12 And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”

13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.”

14 Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.”

15 Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ,

16 John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

17 “His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

18 So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.

19 But when Herod the tetrarch was reprimanded by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the wicked things which Herod had done,

20 Herod also added this to them all: he locked John up in prison.

② DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the following questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with other.

1. After reading the text above, read Deut. 30:1-3 and Luke 1:17 and glean insights about the historical and spiritual context from which John the Baptist preached repentance:

2. What is the wrath to which John refers in verse 7?

3. Verse 8 describes the presumptuous attitude of the people who came to be baptized had towards God. What was the nature of their presumption (Gal 3:16)?

4. Notice carefully that John said it was repentance that would bring peace with God, not fruit (v.8). What purpose then did John's instruction about fruit serve in vv. 10-14? What does this say about their spiritual condition (1 Tim 1:8-11; Gal 3:23)?

5. How does the peace that comes with humility, dependence, and faith in God influence the peace we experience with others?

Sermon Notes:

③LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFE GROUP.

Compare Luke 3:7-14 with Acts 2:36-40. They are very similar, but different, how would you explain this?

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.