

SRMBC Family Bible Study
All I Want For Christmas
Opening the Gifts of God's Grace
December 4, 2019
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Lesson 2: The Gift of a New Understanding Luke 1:39-56

Christmas gives to us the gift of a new understanding, which affects our relationship with God, our relationship with other people, and our relationship with ourselves. At Christmas, we receive a new picture of God, and it is a picture of love. At Christmas, we receive a new view of other people, in which we come to recognize God in them. And at Christmas, we receive a new perspective on our own life, in which we find that our purpose is to live for God.

Group Discussion.

Describe a time in your experience, or in the experience of someone you know, when life's direction was changed by one event or decision.



Ebenezer Scrooge is a rich, greedy, selfish and angry old man. On the anniversary of the death of his partner Jacob Marley on Christmas Eve—Scrooge is visited by 3 Ghosts of Christmas. The encounter with the ***Ghost of Christmas Future*** represents the final chance for Scrooge to change his ways.

Questions

How does the experience with the **Ghost of Christmas Future** at his own gravesite affect Scrooge?

- What was the change in Scrooge? When have you felt a similar joy in your life?
- How did his housekeeper respond initially? How does Scrooge convince her that he's changed?
- What some ways we can express the joy of Christmas and share it with others?

Read Luke 1:39-56

1. In what way would the information given by the Holy Spirit to Elizabeth encourage Mary and strengthen her faith?

- The confirmation of what God has promised to do in her life.
- The assurance of God's power to do the impossible.
- The confidence in God's ability to keep those who belong to Him.
- The anticipation of God's plans for salvation in Jesus Christ her Son/Savior.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus... (Eph. 3:20 – 21)

2. How would you compare and contrast Mary and Zechariah's responses?

- When Zechariah questions Gabriel about the possibility of conceiving, the angel makes it clear that he is silenced because he "did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time" (Luke 1:20)
- When Mary comes for a visit, Elizabeth greets her saying, "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45).

3. Read Mary's song of praise (Luke 1:46-55) closely and count all the instances of reversal that she proclaims (such as God lifting up the lowly and pulling down the powerful).

<u>The Current Reality</u>	<u>The Reversal</u>
For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant	For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed...
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones,	And exalted the lowly
He has filled the hungry with good things,	And the rich He has sent away empty.

4. How do these reversals point to a new understanding of the world in which we live?

- As hopeless as things look today, we can have assurance that our God is still in control.
- The Evil that is currently in the world will not stand. Our great and powerful God will set things right in the end.
- In Christ, we have a glorious future ahead of us – riches already laid up for us in Heavenly places.
- The trials and tribulations we face pale in comparison to the wonderful future ahead of us.
- God has given to us (believers in Christ) the privilege of joining Him awesome mission of Reconciling the world through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. How does Mary describe herself in her poem to God?

Mary's Description	Remarks
My soul magnifies the Lord,	Her innermost being is dedicated to praising the Lord
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior	She has unspeakable Joy in the knowledge of Her Saviour and being Saved
lowly state of His maidservant;	She sees herself as nothing without God and everything with Him

generations will call me blessed.	She acknowledges the blessing of God (past, present, future) on her life.
has done great things for me	She acknowledges that God has done Great things for/in her

6. How does Mary's song give you a new understanding of God and who you are in Him?

- I am Reminded that I have been created and called for the purposes and praise of God.
- I am Loved by God and have been gloriously saved by the sacrifice of His Son – Jesus.
- God desires to direct His power and blessings for me because I am His Child.
- God has all Power and is in control of this world and of my life. I can trust Him to do what is best for me.
- God has committed to me an important part to play in the spread of the Gospel and redemption of the lost.
- I am secure in the anticipation of the eternal blessings the God has promised to me and all who have faith in Christ.

7. What aspects of God does she describe that are different from your usual expectations?

My Soul magnifies the Lord,	God is Worthy Of All Praise
God my Savior.	He has Saved me from sin and its penalty
will call me blessed mighty has done great things	He is the One who has and blessing me
And holy is His name.	He is Holy and Righteous
His mercy from generation to generation.	He is Full of Mercy
He has shown strength with His arm;	He is All-Powerful (Omnipotent)
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly.	He is Lord of All – Sovereign Rule and Judge over everyone and everything.
He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever.”	He is Faithful to His Word and To His People and Promises.

8. How does the message above challenge you to see other people differently? How might this become a part of God's larger purpose of life and salvation?
- There is a challenge to see people not simply as different or difficult but people that God loves and longs to know Jesus as Savior.
 - This a Challenge to see my Church family as fellow workers and teammates in God's Gospel mission.
 - Those who are bent to do evil and reject God, are to be pitied when we know that unless they repent, they will face the Awesome wrath and judgement of God.
 - With all this in mind, there is a greater Challenge to share the True Meaning of Christmas – the Birth of Jesus the One who came to save us from our sins.

Ask God to build in you a new understanding of Him and build in you an attitude of humility and gratefulness like Mary.

Advent Prayer

Lord God, you are the one who gives sight. Open our eyes to see you differently, to see our neighbors differently, and to have a fresh vision of our purpose in your world. Give to us this day a new understanding, so that we might see ourselves as you see us. Help us to know the height and depth of your love, so that we might rest in it and share it with all others.

Amen.