



THE COMING

King

GOOD NEWS FOR THE LEAST

Advent Study Guide
Luke 1:39-56
December 8, 2019

Speaking this Advent season of Jesus' birth as the coming of kingdom that is good news for the least, let us turn to excerpts from Jonathan Wilson's article "Jesus is the Justice of God," published in Canadian Baptist Ministries' *Mosaic*, Fall 2019:

There are many visions and stories of justice clamouring for our allegiance. The temptation is for Christians to sign up for one of those versions of justice...But when we say, "Jesus is the justice of God," we are saying that the only true, hopeful and complete story of justice is the "Jesus story," that is, the gospel. And only this story offers a vision of justice that has already been made real and whole and guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus. His resurrection is God's vindication of all he claimed and taught - that through him all creation would be made right, and lined up with God's intentions for the life of the world. In other words, through Jesus we and all creation is made "just": justified, reconciled.

So, when we say, "Jesus is the justice of God," we are saying that this is the only story and vision of true justice because it is the story of God making all things right. Since Jesus is the justice of God, this means that how he taught us to live in word and deed is witness to and participation in God's justice. This truth is woven into the fabric of our faith.

Knowing, then, that hopeful, holistic, genuine justice is only found in Christ, the Advent message of "good news for the least" propels us out into the community to share our lives and faith. As such, **our Advent series Study Guides pair short reflection on the sermon with the Alpha "Life Shared" small-group video series on sharing our faith.**

*May the joy of Advent be the joy of your neighbourhood,
as good news for the least becomes good news for all!*

39 *In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."*

46 *And Mary said,*

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
50 And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
55 as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever."*

56 *And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.*

Sermon Reflection Questions:

Confess: In what ways have you failed to live in line with the Advent truth of identifying with the poor by living with less? Confess your sins, and rest assured in his forgiving grace.

Discern: How is God calling you to participate in his mission by sharing what you have? In what ways can you share? Consider what possessions in your life you might donate.

Reflect: In what ways is the Holy Spirit already at work in your neighbourhood, filling up the poor with good things? How can we participate in the movement of Holy Spirit?

Singing with Sunday's Advent Liturgy:

*O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.*

*Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

*O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain*

*O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light. Refrain*

*O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace. Refrain*

Notes:

Out of our advent liturgy —
in the hope that good news for the least becomes good news for all —
we now turn to the Alpha “Life Shared” small-group video series.

This video-based discussion series is designed for church small groups who want to take time to think about how they could share their faith with friends, colleagues, and neighbours.

Discuss: Before watching the video, discuss:

How do you feel about the idea that God wants to partner with you?

Watch: Now watch the 15 minute video. Copy and paste the link below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGE4_yS1AiE (Or, visit the website to sign up and download materials and links for free: lifesharedseries.com)

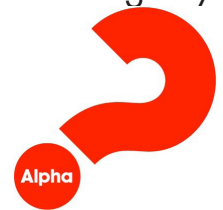
Discuss: After watching the video, discuss:

What inspired you from what Danielle shared in the video? What challenged you?

Study: Read Acts 1:8.

Discuss the following:

- What fears come up when you think about God wanting to use you to reach others?
- In what way(s) does the Holy Spirit empower us to share our faith?
- What do you think about the idea that God can use unlikely people?
- Have there been times when you have viewed people as projects?
- When it comes to the idea of God using us to reach others, what kind of unnecessary pressure do we put on ourselves?
- Think back to the person that God used in your life to invite you into a relationship with Him. What made their witness so compelling and attractive to you?
- What would it look like for you to change your posture by asking the questions that Danielle suggested like, “How can I serve? How can I love? How can I connect?” in your local context?



Spend some time as a group or in smaller groups of two or three, praying that the Holy Spirit would give you:

Love (Romans 5:5)

Boldness (Acts 4:29)

Fearlessness (Romans 8:15-17)

Power (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Wisdom and Opportunity (Colossians 4:2-6)