



Group Leader Guide

“Ugly to Beautiful” - Peace On Earth, Good Will Towards Men

December 20, 2020

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation; encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Message Summary

Jesus came to proclaim good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for prisoners, give sight to the blind, set the oppressed free, and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor (**Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18-21**). Lead Pastor **Jim Burgen** wraps up this Christmas series by teaching about how Jesus fulfilled those promises in the New Testament and how He continues to fulfill them in our lives today.

// Biblical Background

Luke 4:16-17: It was customary for Jewish people to attend synagogue on the Sabbath. A typical “service” would include singing, prayer liturgies, Scripture readings, interpretation of said reading, and a priestly blessing. Jesus, having already gained some fame locally (**Luke 4: 14-15**), was given the honor of reading that week. During this time period, readers were probably free to choose whichever passage they wished, so Jesus’ reading of **Isaiah 61** was deliberate, so He could announce His own personal purpose and calling.

Luke 4:29-30: Jim mentioned how, after Jesus proclaimed that He was the fulfillment of **Isaiah 61:1** in Nazareth, that they tried to throw Him off of a cliff, but He miraculously escaped. This is found several verses after the synagogue scene in **Luke 4**. Throwing someone off a cliff was considered by the religious officials of the time a type of stoning, which was the penalty for blasphemy. Jesus had just

committed blasphemy in their eyes by claiming to be God’s Messiah. So, this was a legitimate attempt to execute Jesus. However, as in other places in the gospels where people sought to arrest or execute Jesus prematurely, “his hour had not yet come” (**John 7:30**). God had a specific plan for how and when Jesus would die, and Jesus being thrown off of a cliff right after the start of His ministry was not in the cards. **Luke 4:30** simply says, “But passing through their midst, he went away” (ESV). That is all the explanation we are given. The most common and likely interpretation is that this was indeed a miraculous deliverance by the power of the Holy Spirit. Some believe that it may have been simply an attitude shift on the part of the angry mob due to Jesus’ demeanor or their realization of what they were doing to one of their own. However, this seems unlikely due to His alleged “crime” and the preceding verses about how a prophet is always rejected in his hometown (**Luke 4:24-27**).

// References

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version: the ESV Study Bible. Crossway Bibles, 2008.

Keener, Craig S Ph.d. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. InterVarsity Press, 2014.



Group Discussion Questions

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// Bible References

Luke 2:14; John 3:16; Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:16-21

// Message Screenshots

- Why do we have Christmas? God stepped into our ugly to make it beautiful.
- Poor: anyone who is in a helpless, afflicted, distressed position or circumstance which they cannot fix on their own and will eventually lead to death unless some outside source intervenes or intercedes.
- Prisoner: an animal or person who was hunted down and caught and is now being held captive in a cage, deprived of freedom.
- Oppressed: crushed, broken into pieces
- Good news! You aren't alone. I am with you.
- I'll remind you of who I say that you are. I will set your heart, soul and mind free.
- I'll walk with you and I'll show you where to go.
- I will pick you up and hold you together.
- I'll forgive everything.
- Jesus had to leave the beautiful and enter our ugly so that he can make all things beautiful again.
- Do unto others what has already been done to and for us through Jesus.

// Community Questions

1. What is the longest you have ever left your Christmas lights up?

// Core Questions

1. When was/is a time in your life when you felt “poor” (financially, relationally, physically, emotionally, or spiritually)?
2. Have you ever felt like someone was hunting you down? Explain?
3. Have you ever been locked in the prison cell of anger, hurt, and bitterness? If so, explain.
4. Have you ever been locked in the prison cell of guilt, shame, and insecurity? If so, explain.
5. When was/is a time in your life when you felt “blind,” lost, and alone?
6. When was/is a time in your life when you felt oppressed (crushed, broken into pieces)?
7. If you have already made it through any of those times, what made it possible for that to happen?



8. If you are still in one of those times, what hope do you have from Jesus and His love for you that can help you through?

// Challenge

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