

GROW Guide

December 24, 2023

It's Time

Luke 2:1-20

CONNECTING QUESTIONS

Where do you picture yourself among the people at the manger?

What Christmas hymn/song speaks to you?

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Let us pray, Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for the coming of your Son. Give us courage and faith to proclaim, in word and deed, the good news of your coming, even as we wait in patience for that day when Christ will come again. Amen.

CONTEXT

It is time! The season of Advent has arrived, and, in this season, we prepare for the arrival of Emmanuel—God with us—in Jesus Christ. Our weary world could use some rejoicing, no? We long for the Prince of Peace in our neighborhoods, homes, cities, and war torn countries. We also long for Jesus homemaking in our hearts. Come explore the many opportunities to grow in faith and carry on the work of Jesus Christ at Easter. So glad you are here!

From Pastor Matt Skinner at EntertheBible.org:

A main focus of Luke's Gospel is the nature of the salvation that Jesus Christ provides. Because Jesus encounters a wide variety of people in Luke, this Gospel offers a glimpse into the different facets of salvation—its spiritual, physical, and social dimensions. Because Jesus speaks many parables in Luke, this Gospel also becomes a source for deep reflection about the nature of God's reign and the ways of living faithfully in this world.

LOOK AT THE BOOK

- Open to Luke 1. How does this Gospel begin? Why does that matter?
- The "orderly account" includes the story of the birth of Jesus. Mark does not include one; what is the value? What do we learn from including Jesus's birth?

- Luke 2 begins by charting the political landscape. Why?
- What prompts Mary and Joseph to make the journey? She is about to have a baby! What does that say about the importance of this political command?
- Where else are people moving and making journeys they were not prepared to make?
- Google how far Nazareth is from Bethlehem. What would it take to make a journey like this on foot?
- Verse 6 tells us, it is time! What is it time for in your life right now?
- What details stand out to you in verse 7?
- “No room at the Inn” is a familiar phrase. What does this level of detail add? Why might be some of the reasons people are told “there’s no room for you here?”
- Pause and google Nat King Cole’s song “A Cradle in Bethlehem.” What does this song evoke for you?
- Verse 8 introduces us to whom? What happens to them?
- Angelic messengers bring out fear; why is that?
- Verses 10-11 are the heart of the “good news.” Why?
- Why do we need Christmas this year?
- What do you want to talk about that has not been brought up yet?

TAKING IT HOME

As we prepare for Christmas, share your light and joy. Remember an elder or underappreciated worker who needs your kindness. Share a small gift or card with them.

An Advent Hymn as Benediction

“Comfort, comfort now my people;
 Tell of peace!” So says our God.
 Comfort those who sit in darkness
 Mourning under sorrow’s load.
 To God’s people now proclaim
 That God’s pardon waits for them!
 Tell them that their war is over;
 God will reign in peace forever!