

Sermon Discussion Guide

Who God Chooses & Uses Those God blessed at the first Christmas

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Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:13-14 (NIV)

Today the Christmas story in Luke 2:1-20 is widely available and in many languages. But when these events actually occurred, most people in the world completely missed them. Very few people got to be there when God came to earth. This begs the questions: Why these people? What made them so special? Truth is they were not special at all. They were normal people just like us whom God chose to use and bless. Why? In this lesson we’ll look at who God chooses and uses.

How to Be Blessed by God This Christmas

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

Joseph was a good man and didn’t want to publicly disgrace Mary, so he planned to quietly divorce her. But an angel appeared to him in a dream...When Joseph woke up he did exactly what the angel of the Lord had commanded him to do, and took Mary home as his wife. Matthew 1:19-24

1. How do we see Joseph responding to God’s command? What has God been prompting you to do? How could you make this a priority? How might this clear the way for God to act? Does it matter if you understand it or not?

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Luke 2:16-20 (NIV)

2. Read also Luke 2:8-15. Even though the shepherds were of the lowest status, an angel of the Lord appeared to them to announce Good News for all people. How did knowing God was near affect the shepherds? What did they do with what they heard? In what ways will you respond to the Good News this Christmas?
3. Imagine for a moment you are Mary, scared, young, and being told by an angel that you’re going to give birth to God’s Son! How would you have reacted? Scripture tells us she treasured and pondered God’s words to her. In what ways does God prompt us to ponder, contemplate, or think more deeply about his Word?

When the Wise Men saw the child with his mother Mary, they bowed down and worshipped him! Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold and incense and myrrh. And being warned by God in a dream, they headed home by a different way. Matthew 2:11-12

4. The wise men were the most educated and intelligent people of their time, and they followed God’s star to find his promised Messiah. In what ways have you sought Jesus in your life? Why is it still wise to seek Jesus?
5. What are you giving Jesus for his birthday this Christmas? It’s easy to think he already has everything—but he doesn’t have your heart if you haven’t yet given it to him—or your faith, trust, love, loyalty...he doesn’t have whatever it is you are holding back. What are some things or heart attitudes you can give him? How will you go about it?

The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. Matthew 25:40

6. How can we give gifts to our Lord and Savior, according to Matthew 25:40?

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.



Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- What’s the craziest or most meaningful gift you’ve received at Christmastime?
- Study each of the four types of people God blessed to be present when he sent his Son into the world. Which one is he calling you to be more like in this season?
- Pray together as you end this session that God will help you let go of whatever you’re holding onto and give it willingly to him for Christmas.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.