

Wrapped

Scripture and Background Information for December 4th.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

Have you ever had a present wrapped that you were certain you knew what was in it only to be completely surprised when you unwrapped it? In so many ways, as we consider Jesus' coming to this Earth we often think of His rescue and salvation, but is it possible we miss out on all His coming brought for us? For many of us, when it comes to our understanding of Jesus' coming, we don't take advantage of the real significance of Jesus coming. This could be for a variety of reasons, whether related to our ignorance, negligence, or even the rejection of Jesus's invitation to us to embrace the presents He bought with his blood for us (Isaiah 53). Throughout this series we are calling **Wrapped**, we will together grow in our understanding of why a savior was born to us (Isaiah 9:6-7) and get a better understanding on what it means in our present day, that Jesus came to preach the gospel to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. All of those truths are related to this season and experiencing all of the good gifts that Christ has come for us to enjoy when the gift of his coming is completely unwrapped.

Background for Isaiah 61:1-2:

In Luke 4, Jesus entered the synagogue in Nazareth and reads this passage of Scripture, proclaiming that in Him it has been fulfilled. Isaiah 61 is considered by some scholars to be a 5th Servant Song in the book of Isaiah. These songs throughout the book prophesy of a Servant who would come whose life would be a sacrifice for the sake of God's people. Many familiar passages in the book are in fact servant songs such as Isaiah 42 and 53. Here in Isaiah 61 we see an emphasis again on the type of life of this servant and what he would provide for His people. In v.1 notice the recipients of His work are the humble or needy, a theme that we see throughout the Scriptures (James 4:10). Isaiah 61 reminds us that the message of Christmas, of a God whose present with us, who has come to bring good news to the poor, to the broken, to the needy, to people just like us is a message worth celebrating this Christmas season.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. As you look at the recipients listed in v.1-2, which do you identify most closely with (poor, brokenhearted, captive, prisoner, mourner)?
2. When you consider Jesus' ministry, in what ways has he already accomplished much of what is stated in v.1-2? In what ways are we still waiting for his work to be completed?
3. In this series we have talked about the way we often can miss out on some of what Jesus came to accomplish. What do we miss out on if we fail to live in light of these purposes (those listed in v.1-2) of Jesus for His people?