

# Wrapped

## *Scripture and Background Information for December 11-17.*

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 Luke 5:17-26:**

In Luke 4, Jesus proclaimed that he has come to give freedom to those who are captives and those who are oppressed. This didn't sit well with those who heard him say this and they ran Jesus out of town. But this didn't stop Jesus from fulfilling His word. He was determined to be the One who gives freedom and in Luke 5, Jesus begins to give out this freedom to multiple people.

The word for freedom is incredibly important throughout Luke but it is especially prominent in our passage. The word used in Luke 4 for freedom is also used in chapter 5 many times, but it is translated in different ways. In Luke 5:11, after Jesus has called some of His disciples, the word for freedom is translated, "left," as the disciples left everything behind to follow Jesus. In essence, the disciples were freed to follow Jesus. After this, the word is first used in our passage in Luke 5:19 when the friends of the paralytic let him down before Jesus. In doing this, He was freed from everything that was holding him back to seeing Jesus. Lastly, and most profoundly, the word for freedom is translated, "forgiven," in Luke 5:20, 21, 23, and 24. The connection here is that forgiveness itself is an act that grants freedom to those who receive it.

Essentially, what Jesus proclaimed about Himself in chapter 4 is being acted out in chapter 5. He says that He has been sent to give freedom and now He is accomplishing that very task. This shows us that Jesus is faithful to His promises but also forces us to think deeply about the ways in which we've been offered the freedom of Jesus in our own lives. Have we accepted this freedom or not?

### Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. This passage is connected by the continued use of the word for freedom in Luke 4 that is translated forgive here. What role does God's forgiveness play in bringing freedom?
2. In v. 25-26, Jesus' forgiveness results in the people glorifying God. What moments in your life have caused you to praise God for His freedom and forgiveness? Why were these moments profound?
3. Knowing that God freely offers his forgiveness, are there things in your life that are still hard to bring to God? What could you be missing out on by not seeking His forgiveness and that of others? How could God's forgiveness be an emphasis for you this Christmas season?