

Wrapped

Scripture and Background Information for December 18-24.

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 18:35-43:

In Luke 4, Jesus initiates his ministry by telling people that he is the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 61. Jesus essentially claims to be the Messiah who the Israelites were waiting for and says that his ministry will be defined by proclaiming good news to the poor, giving freedom to those who are captives and oppressed, and recovering the sight of the blind.

Throughout the Gospel of Luke, Jesus satisfies each part of His proclamation in Luke 4 and the theme of restoring sight is present at multiple points (Ex. Luke 7 and 24). But, this week, our focus is on the story from Luke 18 where Jesus restores the sight of a blind beggar. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem where he would soon fulfill his Messianic duty by being imprisoned, killed, and raised, when he encounters a blind man while passing through Jericho. The blind man was in a dire situation with no tangible way of supporting or caring for himself and rejected by society. He shows immense faith in Jesus by calling out to Jesus despite the opposition he had from the crowd around him. Ironically, only the blind man really understands who Jesus is and refers to him as the Son of David which is a term that is associated with the Jewish Messiah. This shows that the man believed Jesus was special and could help him see again. Jesus, because of the faith of the blind man, restores his sight and the man and many who saw praised God. Jesus once again proved that he is the one that they have been waiting for, the Messiah that has come to save the world.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. While the man was physically blind, he wasn't spiritually blind to who Jesus truly was. What can cause us to be spiritually blind and distract us from the truth of who Jesus is?
2. The man had a specific issue, blindness, that Jesus was able to help him with. What do you need Jesus to help you with? What would it look like for him to help you with that issue in this season?
3. What do you believe Jesus came to this earth to do? Who do you genuinely believe he is? If you have a group of believers, use this as a time to go around and share testimonies with one another.