

A Weary World Rejoices

Week 1 – No More Gloom

Transition: Last week we took a pause between the Standing Alone Series and our Christmas series. The focus was on what it means to be a part of the family of God.

Context: This week we start a new Christmas series **A Weary World Rejoices**. We will explore Isaiah 9:1-7. The setting for this is when the kings of Israel and Syria are set to invade Jerusalem and king Ahaz is frightened. So, God sends Isaiah to comfort Ahaz and the people of Judah.

Opening Questions:

- Many associate the Christmas season with gloom and darkness. Why do you think this is?
- In what ways do you see people walking in darkness around you?

Scripture/Storying: Isaiah 9:1-2

Discipleship Questions:

- During Isaiah's ministry, the northern kingdom became a province of Assyria, placing them in darkness and gloom, which was a direct result of Israel's disobedience. Have you ever faced times of darkness and gloom because of your disobedience to God? Share your story and what you learned from the experience.
- Read John 1:43-46. Nazareth (Jesus' hometown) was in the heart of Zebulun, an obscure no-name town. God chose the least expected to be the first to see the light. What does this tell us about God's heart for the "least of these?" Do you have a story where God chose the least expected thing to be a channel of grace in your life?
- Read John 7:52. This text indicates that Galilee was not viewed in a positive light by the Jews. Its inhabitants consisted of a variety of non-Jews. Jesus brought light to this unsophisticated region filled with Gentiles first. What does this tell you about God's heart for the nations? Does your heart for the nations align with God? If not, what do you need to do?
- Jesus entered our sin-stained, unsanitary world of darkness. When have you entered in someone's messy life for Jesus' sake? What happened?
- For some, Christmas is a time of anguish and darkness. What coping mechanisms do people use to mask the anguish they feel this time of year? What coping mechanisms do you tend to use to mask your moments of gloom and anguish? How do you help someone who's experience these feelings?
- Who do you know that is walking in darkness and in need of the Gospel light? Share with the group and pray for them together to see and receive the light of Christ.
- What is the Holy Spirit teaching you through this story? How does it impact the way you think and live?

Prayer time:

Calicanto, Honduras

- Pray for Brother Noé and his family as they are doing missionary work in Calicanto.
- Pray for Diego Alvarado who is going to be baptized in December.
- Pray for the salvation of people in the communities, especially among men.
- Praise the Lord that this past year of missionary work in Calicanto has remained constant despite the rains.