



"WONDERING AND WAITING"

SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS

DATE: DECEMBER 23/24, 2021

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:

LUKE 2:21-40

Christmas focuses on the birth of Jesus, and rightly so. However, the story has been told so often that it's easy to lose the humanity of what happened: a young couple brought a baby into the world under difficult circumstance amidst remarkable promises from God. They had to be wondering what it all meant. Meantime, others read the promises preached by prophets like Isaiah and waited.

In this Christmas message, Pastor Brad pulls those two thread together by looking at what happened after Jesus was born. Luke records the story when the wondering and waiting came together at the Temple.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What are you planning to do with the rest of the holidays?
2. What example or story stood out to you in this Christmas sermon? Why was it significant to you?
3. What's one thing you've always wondered about?
4. Describe something you longed for had to wait for: what it was like to do so?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Why do you think Luke includes this story in his birth narrative?
2. How does Luke describe Simeon? Why do you think that's important? How do you picture him?
3. What does Simeon say about Jesus and his mission? What do you think he means by what he says? Maybe read the text in the Message to get a clearer idea. Why do you think he so quickly recognizes Jesus as Israel's promised Messiah?
4. How is Anna described. How is she different from Simeon? How are they similar? Luke tends to pair men and women in many of the stories he shares about Jesus. Why do you think that's so?
5. How does Luke describe Joseph and Mary's reaction? Why do you think they respond that way? After all, they had supernatural experiences as her pregnancy began.

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What do you think most people wonder about and why?
2. Where do you see people in our culture patiently wait? What are they impatient for and why?
3. Where do you see prominent leaders polarizing a population as Simeon prophesied Jesus would. What are the contemporary issues that divide people and how are they similar or different to those in Jesus' day?
4. What do you think people are longing for God to do, at least the ones who think of him at all?
5. How do you think our contemporary culture addresses deep, human longing? How are we encouraged to satisfy it?

CONTINUED:

LOOK IN: *These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What do you long for from the depths of your heart, and where or how would you expect to attain it?
2. How do you relate to Simeon, or Anna? Do you consider yourself a patient and faithful person? Why or why not? How did they prioritize their time, especially Anna? How might that have shaped them? How do you prioritize your time and what are the effects of those priorities on you?
3. Imagine your Mary or Joseph and put yourself in the story. How would you have felt in those moments with Simeon and Anna? Awkward? Intimidated?
4. How do you recognize God when he's at work in your life and those around you? Share some examples if you're willing.
5. Have you ever been too busy and missed something God's doing? How do you feel in general about how busy you are? How do you think that impacts you spiritually?

LIVE IT OUT: *These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Our world runs at a fast pace which makes wondering (pondering) and waiting hard. How can you make time to ponder what God is doing and intentionally wait for that?
2. Try journaling what you do in a typical week. How much sleep do you get? How, when, or if you exercise. Note the time devoted to work and recreation. Prayerfully considerer how you spend the 144 hours you get each week and see if you want to make any changes. Share them with your group the following week.
3. Pick a promise that God gives in his word and make a plan to "wonder and wait" over it, especially if it's one that you've noted before.