



DISCUSSION GUIDE

THIS WEEK: "WONDERFUL COUNSELOR" [Isaiah 9:1-7]

GETTING STARTED

What is one thing you are thankful for this week and what is one thing we can pray for you this week?

Remind each other of our simple expectations for meeting together

How would you rate the year 2020? 0 stars to 4 stars? Why?

QUICK REACTIONS

- How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?
- What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?
- Did you disagree with something said, or what do you think should have been added or expanded on?

QUESTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

Before we begin, consider that Isaiah wrote chapter 9 with the awareness that Israel would be soon invaded by the powerful Assyrian kingdom. This would force the nation, and families into exile and separate them from all that is comfortable, familiar and separate them from their land and livelihood.

1. Read Chapter 8:19-20—What is Isaiah concerned about? Why? In what ways is it tempting to turn to other sources of comfort and wisdom when things are hard, difficult or even dreadful?
2. Although we ought not compare ourselves with the exact same hardships and darkness that Israel was about to face, how have things like the corona virus, social unrest, difficult election season etc... disrupted the things we normally find "comfort", "security", "balance" in? Is this good, or bad?
3. In Isaiah 9, "God's answer to what terrorizes us is a child"! In what way does God's answer seem like the most unlikely of solutions to our problems? Why does it make sense?
4. In what way do you need a "Wonderful Counselor"?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [Isaiah 9:1-7]

Although Isaiah had been preaching God's judgment (particularly on the kingdom of Israel), what total reversal did Isaiah foresee in the future? (9:1)

What contrasting images did Isaiah use to set the scene of his prophecy? (9:2)

To what situations did Isaiah compare the joy that will be Israel's? (9:3)

What did Isaiah predict God would do for Israel, causing her to rejoice? (9:4-5)

*How does Isaiah describe the Ruler who will be provided by God for His people? (9:6-7)

QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

What attributes of God are apparent in this passage?

How is God's promise of the coming child an answer to the real problems we face as human beings, and nations? What are common ways we explain humanities problems that have nothing to do with our spiritual needs?

How would you explain the Light that came into your darkness?

Why might it be dangerous to downplay the seriousness of our situation whenever we encounter hardship?

How much of the injustice Isaiah condemned in his time do you see in our own time?

As our "Wonderful Counselor", Jesus is miraculously born to us to become an amazing advisor who marvelously works in all things for God's purposes, for our good, that will result in victory!

> What victory?

> In what way can Jesus be our true guide, anchor and north star this Christmas season?

> How can seeing Jesus as our Wonderful Counselor shape my prayers?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

What may God be asking you to change, do differently, repent of, pray about, as a result of engaging with this passage?

How can we pray for each other?