

# **Growth Group Questions**

*Second Sunday in Advent ~ December 8, 2024*

## **Introduction**

Repentance is, of course, a matter of the heart between a sinner and God. We confess our sins to him and know that he forgives us by what he has told us in his Word. What blessing is there, though, in confessing our sins to another person and hearing them tell us that our sins are forgiven?

## **Into the Word** – Malachi 3:1-7b

1. The last two chapters of the last book of the Old Testament prophesied about John the Baptist. (Lk 1:17, Mt 17:11-13). In what ways did John “prepare the way for the Lord”?
2. Most of Malachi 3 & 4 deals with Jesus’ coming on the Last Day. In what way will Jesus at his return be like the purifying fire or soap described here? In what way do these verses apply even to Jesus’ first coming?
3. In verse six God tells Israel that they were not destroyed because he does not change. Explain the connection. What peace does it give for us today?

## **Into the Word** – Philippians 1:3-11

4. What brings Paul joy as he thinks of the Philippian congregation?
5. What is the good work God “began” in the Philippians? How does he carry it to completion?

6. I love Paul’s description of his relationship to the believers in Philippi. In what ways is “partnership in the gospel” the best description of the pastor/member relationship? In what ways does Satan sometimes break that relationship?
7. Identify the different blessings in verses 9-11 that Paul prays the Philippians would enjoy from God. Then read these verses together as a prayer for Salem and for others we know.
8. What does a “righteousness-filled” Christian look like? (v. 11)

## **Into the Word** – Luke 3:1-6

9. Tiberius Caesar succeeded Caesar Augustus, who died in 14AD. The 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius would be 28/29AD. All the details of Scripture match history.
10. Why do you suppose Luke gives such a detailed description of WHEN John the Baptist ministered? Why is this unique (and important!) in comparison to other world religions?
11. After mentioning powerful rulers and important religious leaders, to whom does the word of God come? Is there a lesson for us to learn from this?
12. The Lutheran Confessions teach that repentance has two parts. Contrition (sorrow) over our sin, and trust in Christ for forgiveness. Why MUST one have both for true repentance?

**Closing Prayer** Jesus, thank you for your Word, my life. Amen.

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