

# **Growth Group Questions**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany ~ January 26, 2025*

## **Introduction**

So much of our emotion and energy can be tied up in the outward results of what we do. It's true at work, in our fitness and health, and even in our relationship. Why is "success based on results" dangerous in those areas, and especially in the church?

## **Into the Word** – Isaiah 61:1-6

1. Much of Isaiah's message in the book that bears his name is law – he's telling Israel that God's judgment for their idolatry is coming. But every once in a while, and especially in the last chapters, there are bits of pure gospel. How do verses 1-3 apply to Isaiah? How do they more fully apply to Jesus? (See Luke 4:18-21)
2. Isaiah 60 spoke about the perfect peace and safety of God's people in heaven. This chapter talks about Jesus as the Suffering Servant of the Lord. This is what we call "prophetic perspective", seeing both Jesus' first and second coming without recognizing the time between them. (Or keeping them in order!) How does knowing that perspective help us avoid misinterpreting Old Testament prophecy?
3. How were verses 4-6 fulfilled in the nation of Israel? How are they more fully fulfilled in the "spiritual" people of Israel (believers)?

## **Into the Word** – Acts 4:23-31

4. Why did the believers find comfort in verse 24?

5. In the face of suffering, the believers remembered God's prediction that rulers would conspire against Jesus (& them). How might you use these promises of God the same way?
  - Mark 10:29-30
  - Matthew 24:6-12
6. What comfort during trial do you find in verse 28? If you're comfortable, share a struggle with your group and discuss it in light of this verse.
7. Historically the Christian Church has been spiritually healthiest and grown the most when it was persecuted. Why do you suppose that is?

## **Into the Word** – Luke 34:16-30

8. Now you see why Isaiah 61 was chosen as the Old Testament reading today! What point did Jesus make using this text and what was the peoples' reaction? (Look carefully at v. 22!)
9. What was it that led the people to be furious with Jesus? Why would that be a bigger deal than a claim to be fulfilling prophecy?
10. Jesus was rejected not for who he was or what he said at first, but for refusing to give the people what they wanted instead of what they needed. How does this happen to churches and believers today? What do we always need to remember?

**Closing Prayer:** Father, bless me to share your word. Let me rejoice when others believe it & continue to pray when they don't. Amen.