

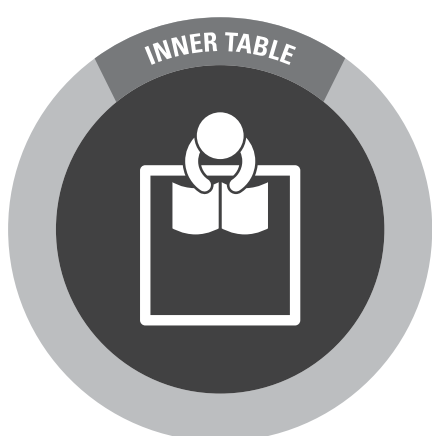
# Sermon Notes

“Good News and Great Names”

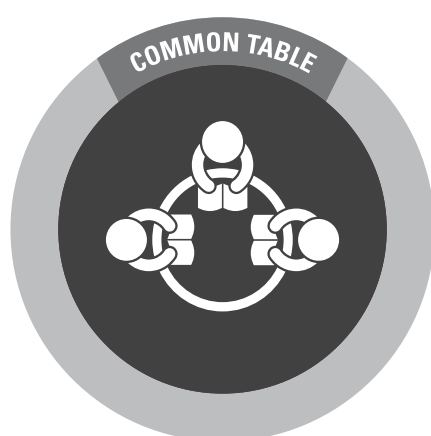
December 9th, 2018



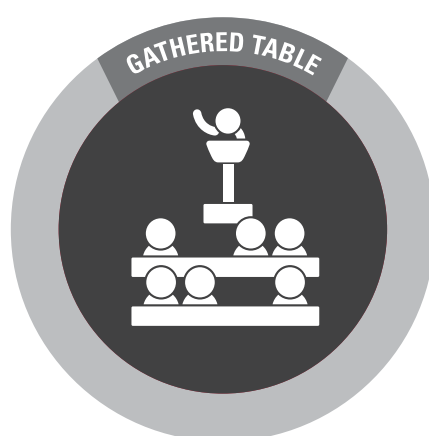
**First  
Friends**  
Church



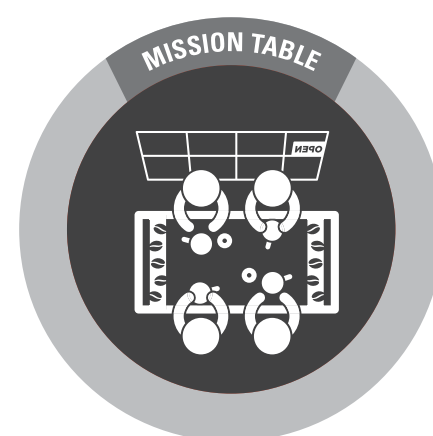
*Seeking God*  
in Solitude



*Finding God*  
in Friendship



*Celebrating God*  
in Community



*Reflecting God*  
in Relationships

## Reflection Questions *(please use these individually or in groups)*

### Sermon Questions:

1. Think about when you first heard the “good news” about Jesus. What most attracted/captivated you when you heard it? Do you see the good news as deeper and wider today? Has it grown in you and you in it?
2. Which of the three names/titles (Savior, Messiah, Lord) most resonates with your understanding of Jesus? Are you looking to anyone/anything else to save you, or allowing someone/something else lead you?
3. Express gratitude for the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Invite Jesus to teach you more about the ways of surrender and sacrifice this week.

### Additional Questions:

4. What does a good declaration of the “good news” look like? A good test for this is, does it match the character of the love of God? Do you think people are more likely to respond to a gospel of judgment or love? If someone does respond to a “gospel” of judgment, are we starting them out with a poor [fearful] narrative of God?
5. What does it look like for you to be “wrapped in swaddling cloths” today? How can your life be a living sacrifice as a sign that points to the love of Jesus?

## Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Luke 2:10-12** | In Jesus’ time, “good news for all” meant breaking down walls so that the Gentiles would now be part of God’s kingdom. What does that look like today?
- **Romans 2:1-16** | In what ways have you played the “judge” in the past? Is that what is required of us? How might you repent of playing the role of judge and instead focus on kindness, compassion, and empathy?
- **Luke 6:46-49** | Do your beliefs match your actions? Are you, through your actions, building the foundation of your life on the cornerstone?
- **Galatians 4:1-7** | If you have lived your life more according to rules and laws, rather than the freedom of Christ, Jesus can redeem that too. In what areas of your life are you trusting in “laws” instead of freedom?

## Self-Care Disciplines *(Excerpts from Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster)*

### December Discipline: Study | Concentration (p.64-65)

Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction. The mind will always take on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates. Perhaps we observe a tree or read a book. We see it, feel it, understand it, draw conclusions from it. And as we do, our thought processes take on an order conforming to the order in the tree or book. When this is done with concentration, perception and repetition, ingrained habits of thought are formed.

Study involves four steps. Repetition, concentration, comprehension, reflection.

Concentration is the second step in study. If, in addition to bringing the mind repeatedly to the subject matter, the person will concentrate on what is being studied, learning is vastly increased. Concentration centers the mind. It focuses the attention on what is being studied. The human mind has an incredible ability to concentrate. It constantly receives thousands of stimuli, each one of which is stored in its memory banks while it focuses on only a few. This natural ability of the brain is enhanced when, with singleness of purpose, we center our attention upon a desired object of study

We will use the story of Jesus’ birth in Luke 2 as a case study. As you read through Luke 2:8-20 this week, do your best to block out any distractions. Find yourself away from people, noise, TV, phones, etc. While reading, look for things you didn’t notice before. Maybe a key word or phrase. Ask yourself what those things really mean. A singular focus on a text can uncover many unhidden things.