

# HARK

DISCUSSION GUIDE

# God and Sinners Reconciled

2 Corinthians 5.17-21

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Share plans for future Community Group gatherings and the following happening in the life of the church:*

- **Christmas Eve Worship Gatherings 9a and 5:30p** | This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, the 4th Sunday of advent. We'll worship at 9a for our regular Sunday worship gathering with the Lord's Supper (note: no 10:45a service, just one morning service at 9a) and then at 5:30p we'll have our annual Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols. There will be our full slate of kids' care and classes at BOTH 9a & 5:30p. But as always, kids are welcome to stay and participate in the worship gathering. At the candlelight service kids will receive battery powered candles to participate in the candlelight portion at the end. (New Year's Eve ALSO falls on a Sunday but we'll be back to normal with a 9a and 10:45a worship gathering that morning).
- **Christmas Party & Hymnsing Friday, December 15th 6-8:30p** | Our 7th annual Christmas Hymnsing is Friday, December 15th 6-8:30p @ the church building. We'll have live music, coffee, adult beverages, fun snacks and Christmas treats to enjoy, some carol singing, plus fun activities for kids. We will have childcare 3 & under and activities in the lower level for ages 4 through 9. Please RSVP for ALL kids by 12/8 listing their name(s) and age(s) below. Parents...you're responsible to be with your children at all times throughout the evening, unless they are being cared for in the lower level for activities. We hope you'll join us and bring some neighbors/friends/co-workers/family along! Visit the event on The City for more information.
- **January Theology Labs, Wednesday nights** | Our theology labs are designed to be short-term, focused opportunities for topical study, discussion, and reflection. Meant to supplement and support weekly worship and community groups, this round of theology labs will happen once a week on Wednesdays, January 10th-31st, 6:30-8p. Each lab will meet each Wednesday for the 4 weeks. You choose one lab that you attend all 4 weeks. The cost for each lab is \$10/person. The classes are: Emotionally Healthy Spirituality; The Meaning of Marriage; Getting to the Heart of Parenting; When Helping Hurts. Register on The City (deadline is 12/31).

## OPENING PRAYER

Open your group in prayer. Pray extemporaneously, or use this prayer: *Father, as we prepare for Christmas, help us to be attentive to not just the trappings of the season, but the meaning of it. Use our time together toward that end tonight. In Jesus's name, we pray.*

## OPENER

If you were a character in a Christmas movie, who would you be? Why?

## STUDY/DISCUSSION

*Advent is the run up to Christmas. We're using the lyrics of Charles Wesley's Christmas carol, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, as a lens to explore the message of Christmas. This week we're focusing on answering the question "Why did Jesus come?"*

1. On Sunday, Josh said that it's easy to filter out things that are familiar to us. Do you think this happens with Christmas? If so, what are we tempted to focus on this time of year rather than the meaning of Christmas?
2. **Read 2 Corinthians 5.17-21.**
3. Have you ever been reconciled to someone? or been apart of seeing others reconciled? What was that like? If you're willing to share, tell us about it.
4. The season of Advent is meant to remind us that we live in a world burdened by sin. In what ways do you see the need for reconciliation and restoration in our world?
5. **Verses 18- 21** - According to this passage, why did Jesus came into the world?
6. On Sunday, Josh said we need to think about the *evil* that we've done, but also the *good* that we've left undone. How does this expand the way you understand the nature of your "trespasses" (v.19)? Does it make Christmas seem more significant?
7. **Verses 17** - What does Paul mean when he says that if you are in Christ, you are a *new creation*? Think back to the story of creation in Genesis 1-2. Why would Paul use this kind of language here?
8. **Verses 20 - 21** - God is making his appeal to Cincinnati through you. What are some ways you can be involved in the ministry of reconciliation this Christmas?

## PRAYER:

End your community group time in prayer. You may elect to just lead the group in a closing prayer, pray together as a large group, or break into smaller groups to pray. You can share requests, or simply pray about the things you discussed tonight.