



December 17th, 2017 Discussion Guide

A Christmas Carol: “Christmas Yet to Come”

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Christmas Past - Memories are good – enjoy them. Those troubling aspects of the past – take it to Christ and take him at his word that your sins are as far removed as the East is from the West. Read and be assured by **Psalm 103:6-14**. You believe that Jesus is the son of God, you believe he raised from the dead – now believe it when he says you are forgiven. *Forget what lies behind.*

Christmas Present – Don’t let your past define your present. You aren’t [insert your name here], forever marked by a sinful past. In Christ you are [your name again], the son or daughter of God – or at least you have that potential if you are not yet following Christ. *Press on to what lies ahead*

Christmas Yet To Come – What does the future hold? Better asked, what does YOUR future hold? Your past shouldn’t define your present, **but your present can certainly define and determine what your future will be.**

Discussion Questions

1. “Your past shouldn’t determine your present, but your present can most definitely determine your future.” Have you had experiences in life where one or both of those statements proved to be true? Do you struggle with believing that statement?

2. When Advent first made its way onto the Christian calendar it was a season to prepare, not for December 25, but for the January 6 feast of Epiphany. Epiphany = a moment when you suddenly feel that you understand, or suddenly become conscious of something that is very important to you. Epiphany in the history of the church is a celebration that marks those times when Christ was revealed as Messiah, manifested to the world. When was the moment, or season of life during which you came awake to the fact that Jesus is the son of God, and your savior?



3. Originally, the Advent celebration in the Church was much more about the second coming of Christ than his first arrival. Jesus gave several long discourses about the nature of his return, and our need to be ready for it. Mathew remembers what Jesus said in that regard, and he documents those words in chapters 24 and 25 of his Gospel. Read Matthew 24:42-51 and Matthew 25:1-15. What does a person need to do be ready at any time for the return of Christ?

4. For more specific insight on living a life that is prepared for the second coming, read 1 Peter 4:7-11, II Peter 3:8-13, I Thessalonians 3:11-13.

5. II Corinthians 5:1-4 speaks of how this world pales in comparison to the world to come. What will you miss most about life in this world? What will you be glad to say goodbye to in this world?

Moving Forward: *In closing, read Jesus' last words to his followers in Revelation 22:12-21. Spend time praying for each other that all can live in such a way that they will joyfully welcome the return of Christ, no matter how unexpected that day might be.*