

Lectionary Bible Study

For Sunday, December 18, 2022 (Advent 4)

Isaiah 7:10-16

Discussion Starters

1. Ahaz was known as a wicked king, so what do you make of his response in verse 12? Was this humility or unbelief? (See 2 Kings 16:7-9 for his alternative plan.)
2. What sign did God decide to give Ahaz anyway? Was the sign meant to be a comfort or a warning?
3. Since Ahaz was such a wicked king, why would God give him such a sign?
4. How was this prophecy fulfilled in Jesus? Why is it important that the child be born of a virgin?
5. What does it mean for God to be "with us?" How would the first hearers have understood this? How should we understand it?

Romans 1:1-7

Discussion Starters

1. How does Paul identify himself in this passage? What does each of those descriptors mean?
2. How does Paul describe Jesus in this passage? What does each of those descriptors mean?
3. How does Paul describe the recipients of this epistle? What does each of these descriptors mean?
4. What do you know about the church at Rome? What circumstances prompted Paul to write this letter?
5. When did you first sense God's call on your life? How has that changed your goals and obligations to others?

Matthew 1:18-25

Discussion Starters

1. How would you describe the differences between Joseph in verse 19 and Joseph in verses 20-21? What accounts for those differences?
2. What do you learn about faith from the example of Joseph? What would have been the most difficult part of this experience for you – the part that would have strained your faith the most?
3. What reason does Matthew give for the birth of Jesus? What does that mean to you? What might it have meant for Jews in the first century?
4. What is the most striking part of this story for you?
5. How have you experienced the presence of God (Immanuel – God With Us) in your life?

WRAP UP

What key insight did you gain from this Bible study? How might it make a difference in how you live today?