



Discussion Guide

Ice Breaker: In 60 seconds, write down the titles of as many Christmas songs or carols as you can think of that mention angels. At the end of the 60 seconds, see who came up with the most and the most original. (It's OK to google if needed.)

1. Have you ever thought about God wanting to give you gifts for Christmas? Real, tangible things that you can experience without any question of where they originated?
2. One significant issue in our lives is a lack of peace. Pastor Tom said that one thing God wants us to open is peace of mind. What is your first thought about receiving that this year? How does God's peace differ from what is offered us from the culture around us?
3. What next steps would you need to take with God to neutralize the effects of grief, guilt and grudges in your life? **Read John 14:27, 16:33 & Romans 5:1.**
4. The next thing God wants us to open is forgiveness. **Read Acts 10:43.** How does the truth that God can and will truly forgive you when you ask Him to bring you hope for your future? Take a moment to ask for His forgiveness for anything He brings to mind in this moment and experience His grace.
5. The last gift God has for us to open is eternal life. In the face of all the hard things that are always with us, there is good news about life and death! **Read John 3:16 & Romans 6:23.** If you haven't said YES! to Jesus and surrendered control to Him, what's holding you back from making that decision now?
6. This Christmas, how can you not only open, but embrace what God has given to you? What changes do you need to make to enable Him to be the answer to what you're searching for? Share with your group some things that this will mean for your future.
7. **MERRY CHRISTMAS!** *When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.* **Eph. 3:14-19 (NLT)**

Personal Guide

Day One: Luke 1:1-25

Day Two: Luke 1:26-56

Day Three: Luke 1:57-80

Day Four: Luke 2:1-24

Day Five: Luke 2:25-39

WISH List

"What Are You Opening?"

CHRISTMAS AT RIVERSIDE

DECEMBER 22ND & 24TH

**MESSAGE NOTES || SMALL GROUP
DISCUSSION & PERSONAL GUIDES**



“What Are You Opening?”

[Tom Lundeen, Senior Pastor]

MESSAGE NOTES

What Christmas means to us really depends on what we're _____.

What _____ does God want us to open this Christmas!

1. _____ of Mind

There are 3 things that destroy our _____ of mind:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

Note Luke 2:14; John 14:27 and 16:33

Real peace happens when we come to know Jesus personally and have a _____ with God (*note Romans 5:1 and Isaiah 26:3*).

2. _____

Our greatest need is _____.

We all struggle with a _____ conscience and burden of guilt.

Note Luke 2:11 and Matthew 1:21

Christmas means our past can be forgiven, our consciences cleared, and our _____ removed (*note Acts 10:43*).

3. _____ Life

Suffering, tragedy, and death never take a _____.

But Christmas is good news, because it gives us the answer we need for _____
(*note John 3:16 and Romans 6:23*).

What should be on your Christmas Wishlist?

- We go through life searching for _____...
- ...but in reality, what we are searching for is God Himself.
- Christmas is God's _____ to our search...
- Within all our hearts is a God-shaped _____ and only God Himself can fill that emptiness.
- Christmas is the celebration of an _____...
- Note I John 5:13, 20
- This Christmas, open God's gift to you.

Tell someone about the next step you took today in your spiritual journey. Fill out the connect card to share your response to the message today and put it in the offering baskets at the end of the service today. Have a Merry Christmas!



“What Are You Opening?”

[Tom Lundeen, Senior Pastor]

MESSAGE NOTES

What Christmas means to us really depends on what we're looking for.
What gifts does God want us to open this Christmas?

1. Peace of Mind

There are 3 things that destroy our peace of mind:

- A. Grief
- B. Guilt
- C. Grudges

Note Luke 2:14; John 14:27 and 16:33

Real peace happens when we come to know Jesus personally and have a friendship with God (note Romans 5:1 and Isaiah 26:3).

2. Forgiveness

Our greatest need is forgiveness.

We all struggle with a gnawing conscience and burden of guilt.

Note Luke 2:11 and Matthew 1:21

Christmas means our past can be forgiven, our consciences cleared, and our guilt removed (note Acts 10:43).

3. Eternal Life

Suffering, tragedy, and death never take a holiday.

But Christmas is good news, because it gives us the answer we need for death (note John 3:16 and Romans 6:23).

What should be on your Christmas Wishlist?:

- We go through life searching for meaning...
- ...but in reality, what we are searching for is God Himself.
- Christmas is God's answer to our search...
- Within all our hearts is a God-shaped vacuum and only God Himself can fill that emptiness.
- Christmas is the celebration of an invasion...
- Note 1 John 5:13, 20
- This Christmas, open God's gifts to you.

Tell someone about the next step you took today in your spiritual journey. Fill out the connect card to share your response to the message today and put it in the offering baskets at the end of the service today. Have a Merry Christmas!