

**Instructions:**

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



**Series: Back to the Future**

What are the promises of God revealed to God's people through the prophets? How were these words received then? Have they been fulfilled in Christ? What promises are we still waiting for?

Join us this Advent and Christmas as we journey back to the words of Isaiah to hear the promises of God again, so that we might look to the future with hope, love, and joy. Because God always keeps God's promises.

**Message description:**

The people of Israel have returned home to Jerusalem to find their homes and temple in ruin; moving home hasn't gone how they thought it would and infighting and land disputes that persist. In this moment of confusion, disillusionment, and discouragement, the prophet speaks: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news." The good news that Isaiah speaks of will be good news for the poor, the broken-hearted, the prisoner, and the oppressed. Salvation in God will be like a year of Jubilee when debts are wiped away, slaves are freed, fields are allowed to rest, and land is returned (Levt 25:1-23, Dt. 15:1-15). Salvation in God will be like a renewed city and an abundant garden- and this is good news of great joy!

These are the very same words that Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah as he taught in the synagogue in Luke 4: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim good news to the poor. And Jesus said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." This promise of God of salvation that will bring healing, liberty, release, and comfort is now fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ! How can we find true joy today? In joining Jesus on his mission of announcing and embodying the good news, the message of salvation that is for all people.

**Key Scripture**

*Isaiah 61, Luke 4:16-21*

### Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. Start by sharing something good that has happened this week.
2. Where have you encountered the good news recently?
3. Read Luke 4:16-21, this time adding vv 22-30. Why do you think the people went from gracious and in awe of Jesus' words in v 22 to furious in vv 28-29? What power do you see in this proclamation?
4. How is the good news defined in both Isaiah 61 and Luke 4?
5. What do you think it means to embody the good news?

### Going deeper:

*"To be missional is to live as a people of good news, liberation, justice, and comfort in such a way that the world may take notice and be drawn to the ways of God (First Isaiah imagines 'all the nations' streaming to a glorified Jerusalem in Isaiah 2:2). So long as Christians live as divided people, known to the world as those who judge, fight, and exclude, the church will fail to be missional, no matter how much money it gives and how many missionaries it sends."*

*"Mission happens when Christians and Jews turn their attention to those who are named as recipients of the good news: the oppressed, the brokenhearted, the captives, the prisoners, the mournful, the faint of spirit."*

*"Mission is something that defines God's people as existing for the sake of the oppressed, broken-hearted, imprisoned, and mournful."*

Quotations by Scott Bader-Sayer

### Questions for reflection:

- What do you think it means *to exist for the sake of* the oppressed, broken-hearted, imprisoned, and mournful?
- Where do we (as a church) live on mission like Jesus in announcing the good news well and where could we grow?

### Close in prayer:

Pray together. Create intentional time and space to offer prayers for one another, that we might share in the comfort of Christ together and experience the Spirit's presence.

### Consider the simple acronym of ACTS to guide your time of prayer together:

- A- Adoration.** *Share praise reports or reasons to praise God. (Reading a psalm together can help)*
- C- Confession.** *Leave space to pray silently or individually to confess sins.*
- T- Thanksgiving.** *Share something in the group that you are thankful for this week.*
- S- Supplication, or petition.** *Share concerns and prayer requests you have.*