



### **REFLECTION / DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*Pick a few questions from below and reflect this week, or choose 4-5 to discuss in your home group.*

- For those who are celebrating Advent, what nugget have you learned this week?
- What was the worst gift you ever found under the tree as a child?
- In what ways are you experiencing the after Christmas blues? In what ways is this Christmas symbolic of your life this year?
- In your opinion, why isn't life perfect for Christians? Can you think of scripture to support your ideas?
- Read Psalm 34:18. In what ways does God draw close when we are brokenhearted? How does the church emulate that compassion?
- Read Psalm 84:6. If you're going through the desert right now, what are you learning on the journey?
- What is the hardest part about allowing God to rescue you when you're in desperate situations?
- Spend some time praying for those you know who are going through tough times.



## THINK ABOUT IT & LEADER'S GUIDE

### After Christmas Blues/Christmas Traditions

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#### OVERVIEW

The “after Christmas blues” visit most of us. The holiday wasn’t as restful as we had hoped. We spent too much on too little. And, for some, those “visions of sugarplums dancing” as we slept, maintained their residence only there – in our heads, in dream-world, but not reality. The hopes of “peace on earth, good will to men” got packed up and stored in the garage along with the holiday décor. What happened to the “wonderful life?”

For all who had a disappointing Christmas - Jesus was born into a less-than-perfect world. In truth, it’s more accurate to describe that world as far-from-perfect. His birth takes place in a barn. He and his fellow-countrymen are under foreign occupation, with little prospect of getting ahead. Life is cheap. But, a perfect world wouldn’t need a savior would it? Jesus came because the world needed him, desperately. It still does. We still do. “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” (Luke 2:10)

#### INTERPRETIVE & THEOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Why isn’t the world perfect – especially for Christians? Why does God allow bad things to happen? Questions like these have plagued human beings throughout history, and we’re likely to continue asking them. I appreciate the thoughts expressed on this topic by author and speaker Lee Strobel at <https://www.biblegateway.com/blog/2012/07/why-does-god-allow-tragedy-and-suffering/>.

For further study on the question of pain and suffering I recommend the following books.

1. Walking With God Through Pain And Suffering Tim Keller
2. Where Is God When It Hurts Phillip Yancey

#### SERMON OUTLINE & REFERENCES

1. **We live in a broken world.** Genesis 2-3; Job 17:1. Psalm 31:12
2. **Jesus came for the broken.** Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 53:3; John 12:27; 1 Peter 2:24;
3. **Follow him.** Psalm 84:6; Matthew 4:19; Mark 2:14; Luke 14:27, 18:22