

# Small Groups Curriculum

## Week of January 10, 2021

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Shine in our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, the pure light of Your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind that we may comprehend the proclamations of Your Gospels. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments so that, having trampled down all carnal desires, we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the illumination of our souls and bodies, and to You we offer up glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Before the Reading of the Gospel  
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

### **THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS**

For the Sunday After Epiphany

SUNDAY EPISTLE

**St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13**

SUNDAY GOSPEL

**The Gospel According to Matthew 4:12-17**

All readings are available at [goarch.org](http://goarch.org) or the Daily Readings app.

## **EPISTLE READING**

Brethren, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When He ascended on high He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men." (in saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that He had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is He who also ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

## **GOSPEL READING**

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth He went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

# Discussion

## INTRO NOTES

### 1. The Gifts of God

- A. In the Epistle, Saint Paul mentions that God “gave gifts to men”
- B. Jesus also refers to a gift: the “great light” that has illumined those in darkness
- C. Jesus “descended into the lower parts of the earth,” into the darkness that swallowed us, to bring us this “great light” and spiritual gifts

### 2. The Purpose of our Gifts

- A. Saint Paul is very clear that the Lord’s gifts come with a call: “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...”
- B. Jesus makes a similar point in the Gospel, referring to the light as illuminating those in the “shadow of death”
- C. The spiritual gifts we receive are for the ministry of the Church and our life in Christ

### 3. The Call to Repentance

- A. We are not called to simply boast in our gifts or rest idly
- B. Jesus ends the Gospel passage with the call to “repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”
- C. Saint Paul echoes this when he advises us that we must use our gifts to grow “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”

For more on this Sunday’s Gospel reading, watch:

[Live the Word #17 | The Gifts that Free Us](#)

# Discussion

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How are you feeling right now?
2. What talents and gifts has God given you? How has your life been enriched by these gifts from God?
3. Part of being given these gifts is also learning to share them with others. How do you exercise these gifts? Do you use them in a way that's centered on Christ? Or something else?
4. What are some practices you can adopt to recenter your heart and re-dedicate your gifts to the one who gave them to you?

If you don't get through all the questions, that's ok!

# Discussion

## **WRAP-UP NOTES**

Each Wrap-Up should be personal and based on your time together as a Small Group. These three questions can help you, as a Small Group Leader, wrap up your weekly meeting:

1. What are you grateful to have learned or heard in the conversation?
2. What simple statement or question from the conversation can you share again that would be most helpful to hear again three years from now?
3. If you could share up to twelve words on the topic of “gifts” what would you say?

## **AT THE END OF MEETINGS**

We give thanks to You, invisible King, Who by Your boundless power fashioned the universe, and in the multitude of Your mercy brought all things from nothing into being. Look down from heaven, O Master, upon those who have bowed their heads before You; for they have not bowed before flesh and blood, but before You, the awesome God. Therefore, O Master, make smooth and beneficial for us all, whatever lies ahead, according to the need of each: Sail with those who sail; travel with those who travel; heal the sick, Physician of our souls and bodies. Through the grace, compassion, and love for mankind of Your only-begotten Son, with whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Following the Lord's Prayer  
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom