

1. What two things are you thankful for today about your church?

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (TNIV)<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus**

### **Commentary Material**

2. How does a person go about ‘rejoicing always’ without looking fake or phony?
3. If we are to pray continually, what does that look like, and how should it shape our view of prayer in the church as oppose to prayer outside the church?
4. What’s the difference between being thankful for all circumstances and being thankful in all circumstances?
5. Is it ever God’s will for a Christian to ever be unhappy?
6. How does God use sorrow and heartache in our lives?

**Job 1:13-21 Today's New International Version (TNIV)**

**<sup>13</sup> One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, <sup>14</sup> a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, <sup>15</sup> and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"**

**<sup>16</sup> While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"**

**<sup>17</sup> While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"**

**<sup>18</sup> While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, <sup>19</sup> when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"**

**<sup>20</sup> At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship <sup>21</sup> and said:**

**"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart.<sup>[a]</sup>**

**The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."**

7. One of the things often overlooked in the study of Job, is that in this chapter, Job's wife is suffering the same identical loss. How do you think she felt losing all of her children the same day?

8. If you would have been her, would you have found "comfort" or "coldness" in her husband's words in verse 21? Why?

9. Why does it take some of us longer than others to be thankful in the circumstances we find ourselves in?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What do we lose out on if we are not honest with God about how we feel about our present circumstances.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. Why should we continue to trust God when everything around us seems to be falling apart?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Is “God really good all the time” or is that a phrase we simply use to make God seem nice and loving? Why do you think so?

## **Lifesharing Lesson 2 Jesus Is Coming For The Second Time Matthew 24:40-44 & 2 Thessalonians 2:8**

1. What would you like to be doing, the moment that Jesus returns or the rapture takes place?

**Matthew 24:40-44** Today's New International Version (TNIV)<sup>40</sup> Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>42</sup> “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. <sup>43</sup> But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

**2 Thessalonians 2:8** Today's New International Version (TNIV)<sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

2. What's the difference between the rapture and the second coming?
3. When Jesus says “the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him”, what are the kind of circumstances do you think would cause us not to be expecting Jesus to show up.

4. What do you think Jesus means when he says “keep watch”?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. If the rapture took place, and you were left behind, what type of feelings would go through your mind? Who would you go looking for?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What’s the danger for the person who voluntarily chooses to backslide but continues to come to church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Do you think it would have been more helpful if God told us when the second coming would take place as oppose to giving us signs which indicates the second coming is near?

## **Thessalonians 2 The Man of Lawlessness**

**<sup>1</sup> Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, <sup>2</sup> not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. <sup>3</sup> Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness<sup>[a]</sup> is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. <sup>4</sup> He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called**

**God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.**

8. Does the rapture have to take place before the Anti-Christ arrives on the scene? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What is God’s purpose in telling us about the rapture and the second coming?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. If someone said, “what can I do to truly be ready for the rapture, what would you tell them?”

**Life-Sharing Lesson 3 “Jesus Comes With A Price Tag---The Price We Pay”  
Luke 1:26-39 Matthew 1:18-23**

1. What will Christmas cost you this year?

**Luke 1:26-39vToday's New International Version (TNIV) The Birth of Jesus  
Foretold**

**<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”**

**<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

**<sup>34</sup> “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”**

**<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called<sup>[a]</sup> the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail.”**

**<sup>38</sup> “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me according to your word.” Then the angel left her.**

2. What price is Mary being asked to pay to do the will of God for her life just before the first Christmas?

3. What are some of the prices we have to pay to be faithful followers of Christ?

4. How comfortable would you have been saying to the angel, “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me according to your word.”

### **Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son Matthew 1:18-23**

**<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about<sup>[a]</sup>: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.**

**<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,<sup>[b]</sup> because he will save his people from their sins.”**

**<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”<sup>[c]</sup> (which means “God with us”).**

5. At first in verses 18 & 19 what price was Joseph being asked to pay to accept Jesus for the first Christmas, and what price was he willing to pay?

6. Why didn’t God tell Joseph in advance what the Lord was doing in Mary’s life?



7. Why is it at times that God seems to care so little for our reputation among others? (For example, God had to have known the things people would have been saying behind Mary and Joseph's back about the child being born so soon)

8. Why didn't God just sit down Mary & Joseph and give them both the same news at the same time?

9. How is a Christmas a reminder of our sins and brokenness before God?

**John 3:16-18 Today's New International Version (TNIV)<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**

10. Where do we find Christmas in the passage above?

## **Life-Sharing Lesson 4 “At Christmas, Expect The Unexpected” Matthew 2:7-18**

1. What’s the most unexpected thing to ever happen to you during the Christmas season?

### **Matthew 2:7-18 Today's New International Version (TNIV)**

**<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”**

**<sup>9</sup> After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup> On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.**

### **The Escape to Egypt**

**<sup>13</sup> When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”**

**<sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”<sup>[a]</sup>**

**<sup>16</sup> When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.**

**<sup>17</sup> Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:**

**<sup>18</sup> “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”<sup>[b]</sup>**

2. How do you think Mary & Joseph felt when the magi came to visit them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What plans do you think they may have made with the gifts for Jesus before the visit of the angel, and what were probably the plans after the visit from the angel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Why do our plans for our money or special gifts sometimes have to be discarded?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. If you had of been Mary or Joseph, how would you have felt after the visit from the angel saying Herod was going to search for the child to kill him?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How do we know when we are to stay in a situation and fight, and when it is we are to run from a situation to save our lives?

7. Joseph's response to the angel's word was immediate. He got up and left the country that night. Why do we delay obeying God in our own situations?
  
8. How was Jesus bringing further complications to Mary & Joseph lives? Do you think Mary was expecting anything like this when she said, "May it be to me all that you have said"?
  
9. What are some of the unexpected heartbreaks that can happen to us at Christmas?
  
10. How do you think the people of Bethlehem felt toward Mary and Joseph after Herod's soldiers slaughtered their children? Do you think they would have been welcomed back into the town after they returned from Egypt?
  
11. If you had of been in Bethlehem and knew where Mary and Joseph were, would you have been willing to tell the soldiers to save your child's life?
  
12. Why is a life following after God, is a life that will be filled with the unexpected.