

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

Advent Series 2018

These questions are for the **December 2, 2018** sermon, "The Branch of Christmas." Please read the sermon passage (Isaiah 4:2-6) together out loud.

Sermon Outline

AS WE APPLY THE TERM "THE BRANCH" TO THE JESUS CHRIST, NOTE . . .

1. The descriptions of the Branch (2)
 - a. He is "the branch of the LORD," which means he fully God, emphasizing Jesus' deity.
 - b. He is "the fruit of the land," which means he is human, emphasizing Jesus' humanity.
 - c. This branch could be an Almond Branch, which show us these qualities about Jesus . . .
 - i. It buds in winter, providing hope when the days are cold.
 - ii. It buds in winter, providing proof of new life to come.
 - d. This branch is beautiful and treasured, "glorious."
2. The return of the Branch (3-4)
 - a. A small group remaining in Jerusalem will place their hope and trust in this Messiah.
 - b. Jesus, this branch, will purify those who trust him . . .
 - i. In his first coming, Jesus will wash and cleanse those who will trust him.
 - ii. In his second coming, Jesus will judge and destroy those who reject him.
3. The glory of the Branch (5-6)
 - a. "Glory" speaks of the manifested (or seen/felt) presence of the LORD.
 - i. His presence is "heavy," unmistakable.
 - ii. His promises are true, and his protection for those who trust him is certain.
 - b. The canopy, or tent (protection) is a place of refuge for all who turn to Him.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: If the promises of God in the Older Testament could be compared to a life-giving tree, it often appears that this tree has died, or been "cut down," leaving only a *stump*. In what ways do your conversations with unbelievers today reveal that they perceive God as a "stump" (or a 'once-hopeful higher power who now looks pretty dead')? Do your conversations with believers ever echo this sentiment? Do you ever battle with this unbelief yourself?
2. Based on #1, above: Jesus is called a Christmas "Branch." He grows out of a place of ruin after everyone has given up, like an almond branch sprouting in winter. Do you believe this? How is faith in this Christmas Branch evident in your soul? Your spirit? Your mindset? Your outlook?
3. Based on #2, above: It's easy for us to get focused on how bad or dark things are becoming, and how we ourselves have contributed to the mess. But the Branch will "wash" and "cleanse" all who put their faith and trust him. In what way is your Christmas season characterized by savoring and treasuring forgiveness and holiness?
4. Based on #3, above: The Branch provides a "canopy," or a tent to run into for refuge. If we are lacking shelter, we must remind ourselves that Jesus is the "open tent" who provides refuge. What steps might you take today to STOP trying to be your own refuge, and enter the canopy/refuge of this faithful Branch?