

The First Big Step Commitment

Abide and Pray

Week 5

- Sunday, Nov 21** **Good News 2 – Isaiah 11¹**
For Reflection: Nothing but a stump, unsightly and easily dismissed, yet out of this stump appears a shoot, a branch that rules a “peaceable kingdom”. Where are you experiencing the most conflict? How is the Prince of Peace (remember him from yesterday) helping?
Lagniappe: Revelation 22:16
- Monday, Nov 22** **Good News 3 – Isaiah 40²**
For Reflection: God is very active in this passage comforting, speaking, judging, shepherding, no god is like him. Where have you seen God acting in the last few weeks?
Lagniappe: John 1:19-23
- Tuesday, Nov 23** **Good News 4 – Isaiah 43**
For Reflection: Where do you see God doing a “new thing” (43:19)? How does this new thing make you feel?
Lagniappe: 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Wednesday, Nov 24** **Good News 5 – Isaiah 52:13-53:12³**
For Reflection: How have you experienced rejection for your faith?
Lagniappe: John 1:29
- Thursday, Nov 25** **Good News 6 – Isaiah 55** (a perfect chapter for Thanksgiving⁴)
For Reflection: Identify the 5 biggest ways you have experienced God’s provision in your life. OR When is the last time you have been truly satisfied? OR When is the last time you have been truly disappointed by a promise of satisfaction? OR How have you experienced the strange power of God’s Word (9-11)?
Lagniappe: John 4:13-14

¹ The call of Isaiah refers to Israel becoming nothing more than a stump 5:11-13. Jesse is the father of King David.

² This is where we find the fault line that runs through Isaiah. Chapter 40 marks the end of judgement section and the beginning of comfort section.

³ This is the fourth and last servant song (Isa. 42:1-7, 49:1-6 and 50:4-9 are the other 3). The servant is Israel and/or Jesus. The NT writers commonly apply this passage to Jesus. (Matt. 27:38,57-60; John 1:29; Acts 8:32-34 and I Peter 2:22-23)

⁴ Providence is the theme of chapter 55 and Thanksgiving

Galatians – Galataj

Galatians is thought to be the first of the Pauline letters to be written. It was probably written in the late 40's or early 50's - within a couple of decades of Jesus death and resurrection and during Paul's second or third missionary journey.

The tone of this book is strident, even testy at times. Paul is New York direct, you only have to read 6 verses before you can imagine people squirming. One of the first threats to the Church was the threat of Jewish legalism. Paul fiercely defends the gospel, his mission, and himself as an apostle.

It is most like his letter to the Romans and at the other end of the continuum in NT scripture it is least like the book of James (so that might be our next NT Book). Paul's letters to the Romans and the Galatians were the scriptural marching orders for the reformation. These letters, penned in the 1st century turned a world upside down in the 16th century (Isaiah 55:11) Luther's commentary on the six chapters of Galatians is 567 pages in length.

Friday, Nov 26

Galatians 1 (spotlight verses 6-10)

For Reflection: What subject are you most passionate about? OR Whose approval matters most to you (vs 10)? On a scale of one to ten how hard is it to not be liked/appreciated/loved?

Lagniappe: 1 Thessalonians 2:4

Saturday Nov 27

Galatians 2 (spotlight verses 15-21)

For Reflection: How uncomfortable do you get when good people disagree? What would have been lost if Paul didn't stand his ground? What distinction is Paul making between the law and faith?

Lagniappe: Psalm 14:1-3

Week 6

Sunday, Nov 28

Galatians 3 (spotlight verses 6-9 and 23-29)

For Reflection: How would you explain to someone curious about your faith, what it takes to become a child of God?

Lagniappe: John 1:12

Monday, Nov 29

Galatians 4 (spotlight verses 4-7)

For Reflection: In reference to verses 1-7, how has God/Christ changed your identity?

Lagniappe: 1 Peter 2:10

Tuesday, Nov 30

Galatians 5 (spotlight verses 1, 16-26)

For Reflection: In reference to verse 1, what threatens to make a slave of you? What does it mean to live by the Spirit? What “fruit” are you recently evidencing in your life?

Lagniappe: John 15:4-5

Wednesday Dec 1 **Galatians 6⁵** (spotlight verses 1-10)

For Reflection: Verse 9 begins, “let us not grow weary...” how weary are you? Where do you find new strength when you have “hit the wall”?

Lagniappe: Isaiah 40: 28-31 & Matthew 11:28

A Little Advent Break from our Method

I thought it might be encouraging to focus on passages that speak to the season

Thursday, Dec 2 **Genesis 12:2-3**

For Reflection: Is a child born in Bethlehem the realization of this promise? After a couple millennia the people of Jesus day still were expectant of the Messiah. That’s patience!

Lagniappe: Galatians 3:6-9

Friday, Dec 3 **Isaiah 40:9-11**

For Reflection: This was written to people who were exiled from their home. How would they hear these words? Jesus comes as a king and a shepherd how do you experience him as King? as Shepherd?

Lagniappe: John 10:11

Saturday, Dec 4 **Jeremiah 33:14-16**

For Reflection: How is the Christ child like a shoot of vegetation, new growth? How is Jesus your righteousness?

⁵ 5 chapters on freedom, grace and faith and then ... Surprise... holiness matters. We are not justified by our works but our lifestyles matter. You reap what you sow, it sounds like James wrote the last chapter