

“How the Grinch Stole Christmas”

Series: “*Christmas Classics*”

(Part 3 of 4)

Open: Describe one gift (if you could find it under the tree) that might dramatically change your life this year.

Explore: Read Luke 6:43-45.

Luke chapter six contains a shorter version of Jesus’ most famous lessons - the Sermon on the Mount.

1. What specific statements did Jesus make about fruit before applying the same truths to people (vs. 43-44)?
2. What did Jesus say people expect when they pick fruit (vs. 44)? What does this have to do with being a follower of Christ?
3. How do other people ultimately know about the state of our hearts (vs. 45)?
4. How can a person change his or her heart?

Reflect: Review the LG and discuss the questions below.

1. Do you believe the holiday season brings out the best in people or the worst in people? Explain.
2. King Herod was “disturbed” by the question presented to him by the Magi from the East. What real life issues might have people feeling anxious during this time of the year? What does it look like to trust God fully with our lives?
3. A selfish heart can be cured by cultivating a spirit of generosity. In what ways have you sensed God calling you to be more generous than ever before?
4. Emotions tend to run high during the Christmas season. Where do you have a tendency to lose your cool? How can you practice patience and understanding in that situation?
5. Read Proverbs 27:29 together. What is the connection between our hearts and our actions? In what way would you like God to change your heart this year?

Live:

As a group: Sub-group into gender friendly groups. Then ask group members to share how they are doing this Christmas Season. What emotions and attitudes may be shrinking your heart this year? Finally – take time to pray for one another.

On your own: Many people miss the true meaning of Christmas and also miss out on finding true joy for life. Take a look at your heart. What will you do in the weeks ahead to grow the joy in your heart?

Listening Guide Notes

“As water reflects a face, so a man’s heart reflects the man.” –**Proverbs 27:19**

^[1]“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ^[2]and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.’” –**Matthew 2:1-2 (NIV)**

A heart 3 sizes too small:

1. A worried heart.

“When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.” –**Matthew 2:3 (NIV)**

^[4]“When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ^[5]‘In Bethlehem in Judea,’ they replied, ‘for this is what the prophet has written: ^[6]But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’” –**Matthew 2:4-6 (NIV)**

“An anxious heart weighs a man down.” –**Proverbs 12:25 (NIV)**

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.” –**Proverbs 29:25 (NIV)**

2. A selfish heart.

^[7]“Then Herod called the magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ^[8]He sent 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.’” –**Matthew 2:7-8 (NIV)**

“A greedy man brings trouble to his family.” – **Proverbs 15:27 (NIV)**

“A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” –**Proverbs 11:25 (NIV)**

3. An angry heart.

^[16]“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. ^[17]Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ^[18]‘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.’”
–**Matthew 2:16-18 (NIV)**

“A quick-tempered man does foolish things.” –**Proverbs 14:17 (NIV)**

“A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.”
–**Proverbs 12:16 (NIV)**

^[10]“When they saw the star they were overjoyed. ^[11]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 and of incense and of myrrh.”
–**Matthew 2:10-11 (NIV)**