

HARK

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Mild He Lays His Glory By

Philippians 3.1-11

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Share plans for future Community Group gatherings and the following happening in the life of the church:

- **Christmas Eve Worship Gatherings 9a and 5:30p** | This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, the 4th Sunday of advent. We'll worship at 9a for our regular Sunday worship gathering with the Lord's Supper (note: no 10:45a service, just one morning service at 9a) and then at 5:30p we'll have our annual Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols. There will be our full slate of kids' care and classes at BOTH 9a & 5:30p. But as always, kids are welcome to stay and participate in the worship gathering. At the candlelight service kids will receive battery powered candles to participate in the candlelight portion at the end. (New Year's Eve ALSO falls on a Sunday but we'll be back to normal with a 9a and 10:45a worship gathering that morning).
- **January Theology Labs, Wednesday nights** | Our theology labs are designed to be short-term, focused opportunities for topical study, discussion, and reflection. Meant to supplement and support weekly worship and community groups, this round of theology labs will happen once a week on Wednesdays, January 10th-31st, 6:30-8p. Each lab will meet each Wednesday for the 4 weeks. You choose one lab that you attend all 4 weeks. The cost for each lab is \$10/person. The classes are: Emotionally Healthy Spirituality; The Meaning of Marriage; Getting to the Heart of Parenting; When Helping Hurts. Register on The City (deadline is 12/31).
- **Missional Motherhood, Thursday January 25 9-11:30am** | We will meet at New City on Thursday, January 25th, 9 – 11:30. The format will include coffee and breakfast, a speaker and small group discussion. Come to learn, engage with others and be encouraged! There is nothing to prepare or read prior. This session will focus on our identity as mothers and will incorporate ideas about teaching Scripture to our children. Register on The City by 1/18.

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group in prayer. Pray extemporaneously, or use this prayer: *Father, as we prepare for Christmas, help us to be attentive to not just the trappings of the season, but the meaning of it. Use our time together toward that end tonight. In Jesus's name, we pray.*

OPENER

Which song would you pick as your life soundtrack? Why?

STUDY/DISCUSSION

Advent is the run up to Christmas. We're using the lyrics of Charles Wesley's Christmas carol, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, as a lens to explore the message of Christmas. This week we're focusing on answering the question "How did Jesus accomplish his mission?"

1. **Read Philippians 2:1-11.** What problem is Paul addressing in this passage?
2. **Verses 1-2** - Josh explained the meaning of the word "conceit" in verse 2. In Greek it's *kenodoxia*, which means "empty of glory." How does being "glory starved" lead to selfishness, fighting and conflict?
3. **Verses 3-4** - What fears and challenges keep you from living out verses 3-4? What would be different in your life if you really embodied this?
4. **Verse 5** - Paul says that we have access to a mind, a power, a way of life because of our connection to Christ. How do you access and draw on this? (rather than just trying harder in your own strength)
5. **Verses 6-11** - Pretty much all New Testament scholars believe that this was an early Christian hymn about Jesus. Why are songs so important to the life of the church? How can you make use of music in your devotional life?
6. Trace the trajectory of Christ's life and ministry in this hymn. Where was he? Where did he go? What did he do? Where is he now?
7. On Sunday, Josh said that the pattern of Christ's life is the way of the kingdom — *the way up is down*. Read **1 Peter 5:6**. In what ways is God calling you to humble yourself and take the form of a servant?
8. Dream together... what kind of impact could our church make if we increasingly embodied the teaching of this passage? What if the whole of the body of Christ began to live this out in Cincinnati? What kind of impact could this make on our city? How can you help get things started?

PRAYER:

End your community group time in prayer. You may elect to just lead the group in a closing prayer, pray together as a large group, or break into smaller groups to pray. You can share requests, or simply pray about the things you discussed tonight.

Some specific things to pray for: 1.) Give thanks for the Christmas Store. 214 children were shopped for. We've seen shoppers at the Christmas store already come to worship at New City. We've made more contacts in the neighborhood. Praise God! 2.) Pray for Jai Prakash, our church planter with Partners India. By God's grace, he has now started several new churches. But the opposition in his part of India is great, and he is now being accused of breaking "anti-conversion laws" by a Hindu extremist group. He and his family have been removed from their town for their safety. Please pray for their physical safety, legal protection for their work, and for these new churches who are currently separated from their pastor. 3.) Pray for our Christmas Eve services — for lots of friends, family and neighbors to come, that the gospel would be preached, and some people would come to faith.