

# Word One Bible Study

## Freedom for the Captive - Advent 3 Old Testament

by Greg Arnett

Text: Is. 61:1-4, 8-11 for the Third Sunday in Advent, Lectionary Series B

### OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Reflect on how people are "beaten down" in today's world.
2. Consider how the Good News can lift them up.
3. Understand how God can personally use us to lift people up.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Rope cut into approximately 3 inch sections (one section per person, or the rope could be cut at the time of the Bible study.)

A packet of seeds per person (easy to grow flowers would be best)

Bible

Paper and pencils

### GROUP GUIDELINES

Note: If you desire to break the group into smaller groups to facilitate discussion please do this prior to the opening activity. Tell the group they are going to experience a small bit of what it would be like to be a prisoner. Use the 3 inch sections of the rope to lightly tie everyone's hands behind their backs. (The object is not so much to tie it so they can't get out, but more to give them the feeling of being bound.) Darken the room by turning out the lights and closing off any outside light. After they have settled down, ask them the following questions:

1. How are people today "prisoners?"
2. What are they "prisoners" to?
3. How is sin like being a prisoner in darkness?

### LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

Ask the group to reflect on the brief experience of being a prisoner in darkness.

1. What did you experience while bound?
2. What was it like to be set free?
3. Have you ever had a time in your life where you felt like you were a prisoner?
4. If so, how were you set free? (if you have been yet)

Read Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11. We have focused on the "negative" so far, but this passage is really about the good news. Our passage uses the words: "freedom," "release," "favor," "comfort," etc. for all of the things that we have mentioned before that can make people prisoners.

1. Read Galatians 4:3-7 and Hebrews 2:14-15. How did Jesus put Himself in bondage? How did He win freedom for us?
2. How can the Good News of Jesus' bondage and victory rescue people from their prisons?
3. How can we be involved in the process?

## **CLOSING**

Close by giving each person a packet of seeds. Explain that first a seed must die before it can be reborn as a new plant. It must go through a time of darkness, but the result can turn out to be a beautiful flower. Read Jesus' words in John 12:23-24. Explain that He is the grain of wheat that is buried in His death and brings forth much grain through His resurrection. So it is often with us; we have darkness in our lives, sin has beaten us down, we repent that it has made us its prisoner, but God brings His Good News of forgiveness and makes us into a new creation and uses us to proclaim that Good News to others.

Members of the group can plant their seeds and have a beautiful reminder to share that good news with others. Some seeds may also be planted in the Bible study room as a reminder to the whole group.

*Originally published in Discovery Bible Studies 12, 1999.*

*Updated for youthESource in December 2014*

youthESource is published on the Web by the LCMS Office of National Mission—Youth Ministry. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 1-800-248-1930; [www.youthesource.com](http://www.youthesource.com). Editor: Sherrah Holobaugh Behrens. VOL. 11 NO. 12. December 2014.