

**Introduction:**

1. What normal circumstance of life is the most trying to your patience?
2. What kind of invention do you think would be the most helpful for improving people's lives?

**Understanding:**

3. Read Romans 8:24-25. What does this tell you about the connection between waiting and patience?
4. Read Luke 15:20, from the parable of the prodigal son. What does this tell you about the connection between waiting and compassion?
5. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 What does this tell you about the connection between waiting and gratitude?
6. Read Psalm 62:5. What does this tell you about the connection between waiting and dependence?
7. Verse 4 talks about a shattered yoke. First it refers to Judges 6–7, where Gideon achieves an improbable victory over Midian by the power of God. But also, it refers to shattering the yoke that burdens us. What is that yoke? What has God provided to us for it to be broken?
8. Read Isaiah 9:2 and then read 2 Corinthians 4:6. Make the connection between Isaiah's prophecy and what Christ has done. How does this show the waiting is over? And how is the wait not over yet? (Hint: look at 1 Corinthians 13:12 too).
9. As you think of conditions in today's society and culture, in what ways does our culture need a vision of light?
10. Read verse 2. How can something that has not happened yet be as good as done? How does that affect how you look at your life?
11. Because Jesus has come, people living in darkness can have real joy. Have you experienced that? How can this be true despite our sin?

**Application:**

12. Since Jesus made peace between us and God we become peacemakers. As forgiven people, we become forgiving people. Christmas is a great opportunity to do this. Because you're with family members that you're mad at, because they've offended you and they've hurt you, that can make our family gatherings feel kind of dark. Take the opportunity to light up the room by taking the peace you've received from God, and giving it out freely.
13. We're in this weird in-between period—because the Light has come...but there's still a whole lot of darkness. Just like the people in Isaiah's day, we are in a period of waiting. They were waiting for the coming of Jesus...and so are we. And while we wait, God does really good things in our hearts. What specific thing do you want God to do in YOUR heart as we go through Advent 2016?