



# Unending

# JOY

DAILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL READINGS  
BCEC 2020

ESV VERSION  
(LARGE PRINT)

*Isaiah 35:10 ESV*

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
unending joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain gladness and joy,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Unending Joy  
Daily Advent Devotional Readings  
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# Introduction

It has always been a dream of mine to write a book, a novel or a memoir? A book that's worth pouring time, sweat and effort getting written, a book that's worth getting published, a book worth people spending their valuable time investing in by doing the simple act of reading. Instead, I gift you this book, which I know has been worth every minute compiling: a devotional book that instead of being filled with stories, contains something even better, the ultimate weapon, that's beautifully written, God-breathed and useful for teaching us, rebuking us, correcting us, training us in righteousness: His Word.

This is a Christmas gift to you and your walk with God. I pray that it will help you flourish and grow deeper in your walk, experiencing a deeper sense of His ever-increasing, everlasting, unending joy, especially as we come to the end of 2020. May the pages of this devotional inspire, transform, encourage, challenge, move and breathe life into your soul, daily. And may it help you develop a habit to pick up his sword, the word after you have completed this book.

Everyday there are set readings with questions which you have the option of answering. There are also action prompts, usually prayer, but occasionally a task which can be useful to challenge you and others to do together. The

focus of this can either be for yourself individually, your family/household, the church community, the nation or as wide as the world.

Please do share with your lifegroup leaders or someone on the pastoral team if you've had any special moments or encounters during this Advent season—it's always super encouraging and inspiring to hear what God is saying to brothers and sisters in our church.

Special thanks to Henna for the artwork and beautiful calligraphy. And big heartfelt thanks to Dan Li for helping me with this project!

May God's word on the following pages speak and bless your soul with unending joy!

Love, Ansy

# How to use this book

While there are many methods out there on how to spend time with God in His word, here are some tips to help you get the most out of reading scripture in this Advent Devotional book during the next 27 days.

1. Find a quiet spot that you know you won't fall asleep in, maybe have plenty of light to help you focus better on the words and as you let God speak to you.
2. Before you start reading the set scripture, pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal either something new, or an old truth you need reminding about.
3. Spend some time reading and be open to the Holy Spirit's leading.
4. If you are printing this book, there's space for you to take notes, scribble or doodle. If you're reading this via an electronic device, feel free to add comment and annotating the pages. Alternatively, you can journal alongside this devotional.

# Day 1: Sunday 29th November — Joy To The World

## *First Sunday of Advent*

### *Romans 15:13*

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

### **Rest Day**

Use this extra day to rest, pray, meditate on the above scripture, or to simply catch up.

This space also allows you to take notes from the Sunday sermon.

*What were some small joys from today that spring to mind?*

## Day 2: Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November — Come and Seek the Lord

*Isaiah 55.6-13*

- 6 “Seek the LORD while he may be found;  
call upon him while he is near;
- 7 let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the LORD, that he may have  
compassion on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
- 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
- 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
- 10 “For as the rain and the snow come down from  
heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
- 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
- 12 “For you shall go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;

the mountains and the hills before you  
shall break forth into singing,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.  
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;  
and it shall make a name for the LORD,  
an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

*Matthew 11.28-30*

28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

*James 4:8a*

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

*Revelations 3.20*

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

**Questions:** When we come to Jesus, we have to go from point A to point B. What does your point A look like? And what would you like your point B to look like for this Christmas season? What would you like to achieve by the end of this devotional study?

**Prompt:** Individual: spend some time praying over your answers, coming to the Lord bringing your point A, in surrendering any baggage or hardships that might affect your journeying with Him in this season. Pray into what you would like to achieve by the end of this devotional study, (point B).

# Day 3: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December — Light of the World

*Genesis 1.1-5*

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

*John 1.1-5, 9-10*

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

*John 8.12*

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

*John 12.35-36*

<sup>35</sup> So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

*Colossians 1.15-20*

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was

pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

**Questions:** What does Jesus being the light of the world mean to you? How does that change the way you view life?

**Prompt:** Families/Household: take turns in your household/family to share prayer requests, and share about what Jesus being the light of the world means to each of you. Then have each person light a candle and pray together.

## Day 4: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December — The First Joyful Promise

*Genesis 3:1-15*

**3** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” **2** And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, **3** but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” **4** But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. **5** For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” **6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. **7** Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

**8** And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But

the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” <sup>10</sup> And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” <sup>11</sup> He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” <sup>12</sup> The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

<sup>14</sup> The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,  
cursed are you above all livestock  
and above all beasts of the field;  
on your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and her offspring;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel.”

*1 Corinthians 15.45-49*

<sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

*Hebrews 2.14-16*

<sup>14</sup> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.

**Question:** How can we have hope for the world based on these passages?

**Prompt:** The world: turn on the news channel / find something on the news website to pray about. pray for those who are living in the world of darkness. Why do you think they are there? How can we as those living in the light make a difference to them? Pray about the things of this world, may our God of hope set them free.

# Day 5: Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December — God's Covenant

*Genesis 12:1-9*

**12** Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

**4** So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. **5** And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, **6** Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. **7** Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. **8** From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he

built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup> And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

*Genesis 21:1-7*

**21** The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. <sup>2</sup> And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. <sup>4</sup> And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup> Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup> And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.” <sup>7</sup> And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

*Genesis 22:15-18*

<sup>15</sup> And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven <sup>16</sup> and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your

offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, <sup>18</sup> and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

*John 8:54-58*

<sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ <sup>55</sup> But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” <sup>57</sup> So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

*Romans 4:13-25*

<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

<sup>16</sup> That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup> In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” <sup>19</sup> He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup> No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup> That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” <sup>23</sup> But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

*Galatians 3:7-18*

<sup>7</sup> Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” <sup>9</sup> So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

<sup>10</sup> For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” <sup>11</sup> Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” <sup>12</sup> But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— <sup>14</sup> so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

<sup>15</sup> To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. <sup>16</sup> Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. <sup>17</sup> This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward,

does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

*1 Peter 2:9-10*

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

**Questions:** What are some of the key truths from today's passages that encourage you to stand firm in your faith?

**Prompt:** The church: is there someone within the church that is struggling right now to have hope? If no one comes to mind, consider going on your phone contact list and ask God to reveal to you who to pray for. If you're feeling courageous, why not message them asking how you can pray for them today.

## Day 6: Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December — Christ Prophesied

*Isaiah 7.10-14*

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: <sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup> And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

*Jeremiah 23:1-8*

<sup>1</sup> “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. <sup>2</sup> Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. <sup>4</sup> I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they

shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.

5 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’

7 “Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ 8 but ‘As the LORD lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.”

### *Matthew 1.22-23*

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”

*1 John 4.7-10*

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

*Revelation 21.3-5*

<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

**Questions:** How has God expressed His deep love and concern for you, based on what you have just read? How can this motivate you to express God's love to others?

**Prompt:** The nation: a great way to pray for our nation is to pray for the government. Look up online by searching "how to pray for parliament" there are many useful guides on how to pray. Consider reading the prayers the members in parliament pray before they engage in debate too! Let your prayers be motivated by God's love, and pray God's love to reign through our nation.

## Day 7: Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December — Root of David

*2 Samuel 7.8-16*

<sup>8</sup> Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup> And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup> from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>12</sup> When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of

the sons of men, <sup>15</sup> but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. <sup>16</sup> And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’”

*Jeremiah 23.1-8*

<sup>1</sup>“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. <sup>2</sup> Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. <sup>4</sup> I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.

<sup>5</sup> “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>6</sup> In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’

7 “Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ 8 but ‘As the LORD lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.”

*Isaiah 11.1-6*

1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,

and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,

or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

5 Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;  
and a little child shall lead them.

*Isaiah 53.2-3*

<sup>2</sup> For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.  
<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men,  
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

*Matthew 22.41-46*

<sup>41</sup> Now while the Pharisees were gathered together,  
Jesus asked them a question, <sup>42</sup> saying, “What do you  
think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to  
him, “The son of David.” <sup>43</sup> He said to them, “How is  
it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,  
<sup>44</sup> ““The Lord said to my Lord,  
“Sit at my right hand,  
until I put your enemies under your feet””?

45 If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” 46 And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

*Revelations 22.16*

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

**Questions:** What did God promise David? Of the passages read, which jumps out and brings you the most joy and encouragement?

**Prompt:** Individual: in reflection of this past week, pray for joy, for yourself, for your family/household, church, nation and the world. Spend some time in silence waiting upon the Holy Spirit to reveal any wonderful gems of joy and counsel to you. Note down any visions or words of encouragement He might reveal, and if He wills, share them with someone.

# Day 8: Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December — Joy & Gladness

## *Second Sunday of Advent*

*John 1:14*

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

### **Rest Day**

Use this extra day to rest, pray, meditate on the above scripture, or to simply catch up.

This space also allows you to take notes from the Sunday sermon.

*What were some things of today that make your heart glad?*

## Day 8: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December — Joyful Town of Bethlehem

*Micah 5.2-5a*

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to be ruler in Israel,  
whose coming forth is from of old,  
from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has given birth;  
then the rest of his brothers shall return  
to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the  
strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> And he shall be their peace.

*Ruth 4.11-17*

<sup>11</sup> Then all the people who were at the gate and the  
elders said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the  
woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel

and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, <sup>12</sup> and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman.”

<sup>13</sup> So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. <sup>14</sup> Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! <sup>15</sup> He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” <sup>16</sup> Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. <sup>17</sup> And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

### *Luke 2.4*

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

*John 7.40-44*

<sup>40</sup> When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.” <sup>41</sup> Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? <sup>42</sup> Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” <sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people over him. <sup>44</sup> Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

*John 10.11-18*

<sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my

life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

**Questions:** “Bethlehem” means house of bread. From these passages read, what spiritual bread flavours or nourishment do these words give to our souls? What jumps out to you the most and brings you great comfort today?

**Prompt:** Families/Household: spend some time with your household/family thinking about the significance of Bethlehem, a humble place that God used mightily for His kingdom. Share with each other, or highlight to each other any gifts you see in each other and how that can be used to bring God glory. Pray for each member of your household/family to be used mightily for His kingdom with the gifts and nourishment he has blessed you all with.

# Day 10: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December — God with us

*Isaiah 7.14*

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

*Hebrews 1.1-3*

**1** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

*Matthew 1.22-23*

**22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

**23** “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”  
(which means, God with us).

*John 14.6-11*

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” <sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. <sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

*1 John 4.9-10*

<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins

**Questions:** When do you most feel God's presence? What do you think blocks you from feeling His presence? How can you be more intentional in experiencing Him on a more deeper and personal level?

**Prompt:** Individual: intentionally spend time with God, more than you would normally spend. Put your phone away, lock yourself away in private and just be still with God, meditating on those passages again and focus on a specific word and pray into it.

# Day 11: Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December

## — Law Fulfilled

*Exodus 20.1-17*

**20** And God spoke all these words, saying,

<sup>2</sup> “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

<sup>3</sup> “You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup> but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup> “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

<sup>8</sup> “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is

within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

<sup>12</sup> “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup> “You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup> “You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup> “You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup> “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup> “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

### *Matthew 5.17-19*

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do

the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

*Romans 8.1-4*

**8** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

**Questions:** How often do you try to keep the law, do works, but fail? How can you find hope and joy through the passages you have just read?

**Prompt:** the church: set an alarm for at least 15 minutes (more if you want!) and spend that time in quietness, praying specifically for an individual from church to experience fullness in the Spirit, not bound by the law, but finding freedom and joy in Christ.

# Day 12: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December — Righteousness through Christ

*Romans 3.21-28*

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup> For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

*John 1.1-5*

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through

him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

*John 1.14-18*

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) <sup>16</sup> For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

*Ephesians 1.7-10*

<sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in

Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

*Colossians 1.13-14*

<sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**Questions:** Highlight the key words or phrases that jump out to you from the passages. What are some things God is challenging / helping you with?

**Prompt:** The nation: using those words that you have just highlighted, turn those words around and let those words lead you in praying for different people groups in our nation. They can be for those less privileged, those who are oppressed, those suffering, those in leadership, those helping the poor etc.

# Day 13: Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December — Joy and Sacrifice

*Isaiah 1.11,18*

<sup>11</sup> “What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?”  
says the LORD.

“I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams  
and the fat of fattened cattle.

I get no pleasure from the blood  
of bulls and lambs and goats.

... <sup>18</sup> “Come now, let’s settle this,”  
says the LORD.

“Though your sins are like scarlet,  
I will make them as white as snow.

Though they are red like crimson,  
I will make them as white as wool.

*Isaiah 53.4-5*

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.

*John 1.29*

<sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

*Hebrews 9.11-14*

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God

*Hebrews 10.1-14*

**10** For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who

draw near. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body have you prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,

as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

<sup>8</sup> When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

<sup>11</sup> And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of

God, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

**Questions:** God does not desire sacrifice and offering anymore, because of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice for us all. In what ways in the past or currently have we wrongly offered something to God? Why is it redundant?

**Prompt:** Individual: spend some time asking God to reveal to you something you need to confess to Him about and seeking forgiveness over. It could be an action or inaction, wrong sacrifice/offering, or an issue between you and another individual. Pray and let Christ's redemptive blood wash over it.

# Day 14: Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December — The Nations Will Be Glad

*Micah 4.1-7*

4 It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and peoples shall flow to it,  
2 and many nations shall come, and say:  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”  
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.  
3 He shall judge between many peoples,  
and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;  
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore;  
4 but they shall sit every man under his vine and under  
his fig tree,  
and no one shall make them afraid,  
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.  
5 For all the peoples walk

each in the name of its god,  
but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God  
forever and ever.

<sup>6</sup> In that day, declares the LORD,

I will assemble the lame  
and gather those who have been driven away  
and those whom I have afflicted;

<sup>7</sup> and the lame I will make the remnant,

and those who were cast off, a strong nation;  
and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion  
from this time forth and forevermore.

*Psalms 46.4-11*

<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of  
God,

the holy habitation of the Most High.

<sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;  
God will help her when morning dawns.

<sup>6</sup> The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us;

the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

<sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works of the LORD,  
how he has brought desolations on the earth.

<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the chariots with fire.

10 “Be still, and know that I am God.  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth!”

11 The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

*Isaiah 53.4-12*

4 Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away;  
and as for his generation, who considered  
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,

stricken for the transgression of my people?  
9 And they made his grave with the wicked  
and with a rich man in his death,  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.  
10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;  
he has put him to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,  
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;  
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.  
11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be  
satisfied;  
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,  
make many to be accounted righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.  
12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,  
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
because he poured out his soul to death  
and was numbered with the transgressors;  
yet he bore the sin of many,  
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

*Zechariah 9.9-10*

<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation is he,

humble and mounted on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;

and the battle bow shall be cut off,

and he shall speak peace to the nations;

his rule shall be from sea to sea,

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

**Questions:** Which words of the passages you just read, excites you and makes you feel joyful and glad?

**Prompt:** The world: with those same words, pray them over the world, or a specific country. Praying for the joy of the Lord to be moved in those areas of the world.

# Day 15: Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December — Joyful Mysteries

## *Third Sunday of Advent*

*Mark 1:7-8*

<sup>7</sup> And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

### **Rest Day**

Use this extra day to rest, pray, meditate on the above scripture, or to simply catch up.

This space also allows you to take notes from the Sunday sermon.

*What took you by surprise today?*

# Day 16: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December — Joyful Messenger

*Luke 1.5-17*

<sup>5</sup> In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. <sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup> Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup> And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will

be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup> and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

*Isaiah 40.1-5*

**40** Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her

that her warfare is ended,

that her iniquity is pardoned,

that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,

and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,

and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,

and all flesh shall see it together,

for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

*Malachi 3.1-4*

**3** “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. **2** But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. **3** He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. **4** Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

*Mark 1.1-8*

**1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

**2** As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,  
who will prepare your way,

**3** the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,’”

**4** John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness

of sins. <sup>5</sup> And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

**Questions:** How do these passages remind you of God's ultimate power and might?

**Prompt:** the church: John baptised with water, Jesus baptised with the Holy Spirit. Spend some time asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a brother or sister in church who needs a word of encouragement. Prayer for the Holy Spirit to guide and lead them. Feel free to get in touch with them afterwards if you have a word to share with them!

## Day 17: Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December — Miracles and Mysteries

*Genesis 18.9-15*

<sup>9</sup> They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” <sup>10</sup> The LORD said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. <sup>11</sup> Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. <sup>12</sup> So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?” <sup>13</sup> The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ <sup>14</sup> Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>15</sup> But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

*Psalm 113*

**113** Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD,  
praise the name of the LORD!

<sup>2</sup> Blessed be the name of the LORD  
from this time forth and forevermore!

<sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
the name of the LORD is to be praised!

<sup>4</sup> The LORD is high above all nations,  
and his glory above the heavens!

<sup>5</sup> Who is like the LORD our God,  
who is seated on high,

<sup>6</sup> who looks far down  
on the heavens and the earth?

<sup>7</sup> He raises the poor from the dust  
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,

<sup>8</sup> to make them sit with princes,  
with the princes of his people.

<sup>9</sup> He gives the barren woman a home,  
making her the joyous mother of children.

Praise the LORD!

*Luke 1.18-25*

<sup>18</sup> And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” <sup>19</sup> And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. <sup>20</sup> And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” <sup>21</sup> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. <sup>22</sup> And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. <sup>23</sup> And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

<sup>24</sup> After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, <sup>25</sup> “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

*Luke 7.18-28*

<sup>18</sup> The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, <sup>19</sup> calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” <sup>20</sup> And when the

men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’” <sup>21</sup> In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup> And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup> And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

<sup>24</sup> When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup> What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. <sup>26</sup> What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup> This is he of whom it is written,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’

<sup>28</sup> I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

*Romans 4.19-21*

<sup>19</sup> He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup> No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

**Questions:** In what areas of our life do we struggle to believe God can work miracles in? How do these passages reframe our minds to believe we have a God who is a miracle-worker?

**Prompt:** Individual: pray into the areas of your life you want God to have power and work miracles in. Be specific in surrendering to Him, asking for breakthrough. If you feel compelled to, it might be great to share with other brothers and sisters in Christ to pray with you in those matters.

# Day 18: Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December — Son of the Most High

*Luke 1.26-38*

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a

son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.” <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

*Matthew 1.18-25*

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

**Questions:** Which key words or individuals' situation in the passage you read, do you most relate to and why?

**Prompt:** Families/Household: ask the people in your household if there is anything you can do to help them, in action and in prayer. Commit to helping and commit to praying for them.

# Day 19: Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December — Rejoicing in His Faithfulness

*Psalm 107.1-9*

- 107 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever!
- <sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,  
whom he has redeemed from trouble
- <sup>3</sup> and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.
- <sup>4</sup> Some wandered in desert wastes,  
finding no way to a city to dwell in;
- <sup>5</sup> hungry and thirsty,  
their soul fainted within them.
- <sup>6</sup> Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress.
- <sup>7</sup> He led them by a straight way  
till they reached a city to dwell in.
- <sup>8</sup> Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,  
for his wondrous works to the children of man!
- <sup>9</sup> For he satisfies the longing soul,  
and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

*Luke 1.39-56*

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their

hearts;

52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;

53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.

54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

55 as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

56 And Mary remained with her about three months  
and returned to her home.

### *Luke 6.20-22*

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the  
kingdom of God.

21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall  
be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when  
they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name  
as evil, on account of the Son of Man!

**Questions:** Make a list of God's faithfulness mentioned in these passages. And make a list of God's faithfulness found evident in your life.

**Prompt:** the world: using the list from the Beatitudes (in Luke 6:20-22), use those words as a baseline to pray for breakthrough for those in the world.

# Day 20: Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December — True Light

*Isaiah 9.2-7*

- <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.
- <sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
- <sup>4</sup> For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- <sup>5</sup> For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle  
tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.
- <sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,

on the throne of David and over his kingdom,

to establish it and to uphold it

with justice and with righteousness

from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

*Isaiah 60.1-5*

**60** Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

<sup>2</sup> For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;

but the LORD will arise upon you,

and his glory will be seen upon you.

<sup>3</sup> And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

<sup>4</sup> Lift up your eyes all around, and see;

they all gather together, they come to you;

your sons shall come from afar,

and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.

<sup>5</sup> Then you shall see and be radiant;

your heart shall thrill and exult,

because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to  
you,

the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

*John 1.9-13*

<sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

*John 8.12*

<sup>12</sup> Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

*Revelation 22.1-5*

**22** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will

see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

**Questions:** How can we experience joy from reading about these light passages?

**Prompt:** the nation: using Isaiah 9:2-7 as a prayer, pray for our nation to experience an increase in joy of the Lord.

## Day 21: Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December — Preparing the Way

*Luke 1.57-80*

<sup>57</sup> Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. <sup>58</sup> And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup> And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, <sup>60</sup> but his mother answered, “No; he shall be called John.” <sup>61</sup> And they said to her, “None of your relatives is called by this name.” <sup>62</sup> And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. <sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And they all wondered. <sup>64</sup> And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. <sup>65</sup> And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, <sup>66</sup> and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.

<sup>67</sup> And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup> “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people  
<sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David,  
70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from  
of old,  
71 that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant,  
73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to  
grant us  
74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our  
enemies,  
might serve him without fear,  
75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our  
days.  
76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the  
Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
in the forgiveness of their sins,  
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the  
shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”  
80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and  
he was in the wilderness until the day of his public  
appearance to Israel.

## *John 1.19-23*

<sup>19</sup> And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” <sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” <sup>22</sup> So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” <sup>23</sup> He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

**Questions:** How was John preparing the way of the Lord? In what ways are you helping to lead people to the way of the Lord?

**Prompt:** Individual: ask God to help you discern how best to lead others to Him. Ask God to reveal to you individuals in whom you can reach out to.

# Day 22: Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December — Unending Joy

## *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

Galatians 4:4-6

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

### **Rest Day**

Use this extra day to rest, pray, meditate on the above scripture, or to simply catch up.

This space also allows you to take notes from the Sunday sermon.

*What were some joyful moments from today you can give thanks to God for?*

# Day 23: Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December —

## Heirs with Him

*Matthew 1.1-17*

**1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

**2** Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, **3** and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, **4** and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, **5** and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, **6** and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, **7** and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, **8** and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, **9** and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, **10** and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, **11** and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

<sup>12</sup> And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, <sup>13</sup> and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, <sup>14</sup> and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, <sup>15</sup> and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, <sup>16</sup> and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

<sup>17</sup> So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

*Galatians 4.1-7*

<sup>4</sup> I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, <sup>2</sup> but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. <sup>3</sup> In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. <sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons,

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

*Philippians 2.5-11*

<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*Romans 8.15-17*

<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with

Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him

**Questions:** How do these passages excite you and remind you who you are in Christ?

**Prompt:** the church: ask God to bring to the forefront of your mind a specific family from our church congregation. Spend some time praying for each individual, asking God to give them a tremendous sense of joy and peace today.

## Day 24: Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December — Joy through Jesus's birth

*Luke 2.1-20*

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. 8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a

manger.” <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

<sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### *Matthew 1.18-25*

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But as he

considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

*Isaiah 7.14*

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

**Questions:** Why is Jesus Lord over your life?

**Prompt:** individual: reflect on how far God has helped you in your walk with him, and spend some time praising and thanking God in adoration and

thanksgiving. If you have time, why not track your journey of how far you've come on paper (such as making or updating your spiritual timeline, see [youtu.be/coj1wKU0XXY](https://youtu.be/coj1wKU0XXY) )

## Day 25: Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December — Joy in the Journey

*Matthew 2.1-23*

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” <sup>9</sup> After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw

the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup> And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

<sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup> “A voice was heard in Ramah,  
weeping and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

<sup>19</sup> But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.” <sup>21</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

### *Jeremiah 31.15-20*

<sup>15</sup> Thus says the LORD:

“A voice is heard in Ramah,  
lamentation and bitter weeping.  
Rachel is weeping for her children;  
she refuses to be comforted for her children,  
because they are no more.”

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD:

“Keep your voice from weeping,

and your eyes from tears,  
for there is a reward for your work,  
declares the LORD,

and they shall come back from the land of the  
enemy.

<sup>17</sup> There is hope for your future,  
declares the LORD,

and your children shall come back to their own  
country.

<sup>18</sup> I have heard Ephraim grieving,

‘You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined,  
like an untrained calf;

bring me back that I may be restored,  
for you are the LORD my God.

<sup>19</sup> For after I had turned away, I relented,

and after I was instructed, I struck my thigh;  
I was ashamed, and I was confounded,  
because I bore the disgrace of my youth.’

<sup>20</sup> Is Ephraim my dear son?

Is he my darling child?

For as often as I speak against him,  
I do remember him still.

Therefore my heart yearns for him;

I will surely have mercy on him,  
declares the LORD

**Questions:** Of the passage you've just read, what is God saying to you specifically?

**Prompt:** nation: spend some time meditating on the verse from Jeremiah 31:17. Pray for hope for the future of this nation, for revival for the next generation.

# Day 26: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December — At the Temple

*Luke 2.21-40*

<sup>21</sup> And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

<sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, <sup>29</sup> “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,

according to your word;

<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation  
<sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all  
peoples,  
<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was  
said about him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said  
to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is  
appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and  
for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce  
through your own soul also), so that thoughts from  
many hearts may be revealed.”

<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of  
Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in  
years, having lived with her husband seven years from  
when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow until she  
was eighty-four. She did not depart from the  
temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and  
day. <sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to  
give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who  
were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> And when they had performed everything according  
to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to  
their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the child grew and  
became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of  
God was upon him.

### *Leviticus 12.6-8*

6 “And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, 7 and he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. 8 And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.”

**Questions:** Mary and Joseph followed the requirements of the law, however, what was the significance of Anna and Simeon in this narrative? How can we too be challenged to learn from their examples?

**Prompt:** Families/Household: pray for individual members of your family/household as well as for yourself to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. Pray for visions or a word of encouragement for each other too.

# Day 27: Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December — Jesus is Lord

*Matthew 11.25-30*

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

*John 3.16*

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

*Romans 14:17*

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

*Romans 15:13*

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

*Isaiah 35:10*

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
unending joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain gladness and joy,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Questions:** highlight in the passage the words that bring you great comfort, peace and joy today?

**Prompt:** the world: using these words you have highlighted, pray the same can be applied to the world.

*Bonus: Year in Review 2020 reflection questions for personal journalling or sharing in small groups.*

1. What are some things from this year that you're thankful for?
2. Why do you think hope is so important? And how do you remain hopeful in a world full of hopelessness?
3. Was there a moment this past year that you felt was an "enlightening" moment for you? What was it?
4. Share four achievements you are particularly proud of from this year.
5. What significant event happened in 2020, in which your reaction towards it surprised you, because in previous times you would react a certain way, but this time round, in 2020, your attitude towards it changed (for the better or for worse)?
6. What's been a verse / inspirational quote that has kept you motivated this past year?
7. Name seven people you are grateful for that went above and beyond this year for you.
8. What was one thing from this year that you wished you didn't waste time on? And how can you ensure it won't happen again next year?
9. Is there something that you wished you had done differently this past year?
10. List your top 10 songs of 2020 (most listened to or your favourites of this year).

11. Is there someone you need to forgive from this year? Why? Why have you been putting it off?
12. Using 12 words, sum up each month of this past year.
13. Is there someone you need to apologise to, from this year? Why? Why have you been putting it off?
14. What was an unexpected joy of this year? What was an unexpected obstacle of this year?
15. What bad habit would you most like to kick from 2020?
16. What major milestones happened with your family this past year. How has this affected you
17. Describe an event in the world that has impacted you this year. How? Why?
18. What were some answered prayers of this year?
19. If you were to be so bold, what audacious prayer request do you want answered for next year?
20. Who is the person you most want to invest and encourage in the next year?
21. What skills or hobbies would you like to improve, develop or start next year?
22. Describe one thing you'd like to achieve by this time next year. Why is this important to you?
23. What aspects of God did you learn or relearn this year? And what areas of theology would you like to learn about next year?
24. Write a message of advice to the “future you” so you can read it this time next year.