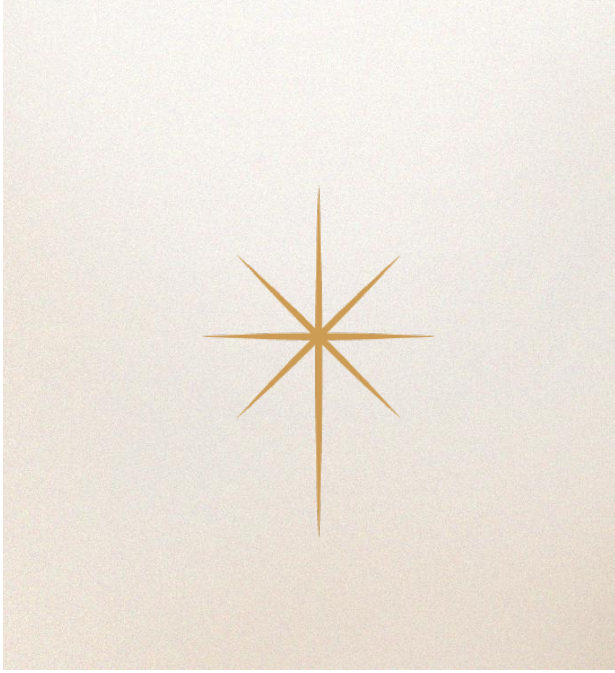


peace
hope
joy & love
Advent Devotional



The word advent is defined as the arrival of a notable person, thing or event. When we celebrate Advent in our churches, we remember the first arrival of Jesus and look forward to his second coming.

Advent readings are organized around four themes: peace, hope, joy and love. With this pattern in mind, we invited our staff to reflect on how these themes are developed and find their fulfillment in Jesus. This advent devotional is a product of their thoughtful responses to the scriptures.

We trust you will be blessed as you read the passage for each day, and meditate on these texts together with us. It is our prayer that this resource will increase your peace, hope, joy and love this Christmas season.

Kristal Toews
Pastor of Discipleship

The word "peace" is written in a large, orange, serif font. It is surrounded by several stylized orange stars of varying sizes. Below the word "peace" is the text "November 27th" in a smaller, orange, serif font.

peace

November 27th

All I Want for Christmas is Peace on Earth

JESSE SCHELLENBERG

Genesis 1:27-28

The idea of a peaceful protest is a bit of an oxymoron because the very act of protesting, expressing disapproval, implies that something in our world is not right and needs to change. You see, peace, in the biblical sense, is not just a lack of violence or destruction, in its fullest sense, is everything being in its right place at the right time. This would mean a world with no war, no broken relationships, no chaos, no lack, no hatred, no violence, nothing out of place, no betrayal, nothing to protest, just perfect peace. This is not our reality, but each one of us, can't help but long for a world like this.

God's original design for all of creation was good, one might even say very good. By day six everything from the distant galaxies to the individual grains of sand were in the right place at the right time. Then God placed the first humans into this glorious creation and blessed them with a mandate to be "fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth and subdue it." In other words, the marching orders for humanity were to simply enjoy a world at perfect peace.

Adam and Eve were to enjoy one another, creation was to flourish under humanities care and all of it was to be held together under God's good rule and reign. No wonder we long for a world at peace, it's the way God created it to be.

Christmas can often make us aware of a lack of peace in our lives. Perhaps this year there will be an empty seat around your dinner table, one less Christmas card due to a friendship that has grown cold or a growing dread knowing you have to get together with family members you are at odds with. Sometimes we just hope to get through the season without major carnage. But that is not the Christian hope, we were not only created to dwell in a world at peace, but Jesus came to bring peace on earth and will return one day to put everything in its right place at the right time. So, what does it look like for you to pursue peace this Christmas season?



peace

November 28th

The Price of Peace

JOSHUA SCOTT

Romans 5:1

When I got into a fight with my siblings as a kid, a sincere apology would usually mend things up. But take a conflict like WW1 and the cost sky-rockets. In 1919 the terms of peace were finally signed by the victorious Allied Forces and the nation of Germany. In the end it cost the German nation 10% of all its territory, all of its overseas possessions, limitations to its army, navy, and airforce, and a financial debt that would amount to about \$269 Billion today. That's a high price to pay for peace, and it took them 92 years to finally pay off that debt.

When the Bible describes the relationship we had with the Lord before we came to believe in Him, it actually uses the language of two opposing forces. It's a little surprising. Colossians 1:21 says, "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour." Romans 5:10 simply says, "we were God's enemies".

So what could possibly be the cost of peace between the perfectly Holy God of the Universe and His sinful creation? If it took 92 years for Germany to pay, how long might it take us? Well for sins against an eternally holy God... it should really take an eternity.

But here's the good news. "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. **But now** He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation." (Col 1:21-22) Normally, the guilty party is the one that pays the price, but the glory of the gospel is that the innocent party, God Himself, was the one who paid it. And with the life of His only Son!

"How do we accept these terms of peace?", you may ask. With faith. Romans 5:1 says, "since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

This is the peace of Christmas. Peace with God Himself. A peace that we could never have paid for on our own, but that our loving Heavenly Father chose to pay for with the life and death of His only Son.



peace

November 29th 

On Guard!

KRISTAL TOEWS

Philippians 4:4-10

I love German Shepherd dogs, because they give me the freedom to go on runs and walks at all times of day or night and feel protected. My nine year old Shepherd, Bruno, is extremely friendly with people, but sometimes when we're out together, he will stare someone down or emit a low growl, and I know something is off: he is suddenly on guard.

We are vulnerable to physical and emotional attacks; worry can sneak into our minds and paralyze us, and we need someone or something to guard us. Drawing on this imagery, the apostle Paul encouraged the church in Philippi: "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God *and the peace of God* which surpasses all understanding, *will guard* your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7).

Paul teaches that the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds when we bring our requests to God, in prayer, with thanksgiving.

The decision to begin with "thank you" forces us to formulate something we are thankful for, and shifts our focus off our problems onto God's promises so that we can experience his peace.

At Christmas, God fulfilled every promise He had given his people: "all the promises of God find their Yes in [Jesus]" (2 Corinthians 1:20). So thanking God for everything associated with Jesus helps the "peace of God" to guard our hearts and minds this Christmas Season.

"Father, thank you that you sent your son to be Immanuel, God with us, so that we would never be truly alone (Matthew 1:23).

"Father, thank you that Jesus is the one who will establish righteousness and justice on the earth (Isaiah 9:7).

"Father, thank you that Jesus wept, even though He is the resurrection and the life (John 11).

"Father, thank you that Jesus was tempted like us in every way and yet was without sin. Thank you that He can sympathize with us, and provides mercy and grace in our time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

"Father, thank you that Jesus is the great shepherd of the sheep who oversees my soul" (1 Peter 2:24-25).

May His peace guard you, minute by minute, day by day, as you thank Him for Jesus.



peace
November 30th

We Make Peace Among Believers

DAN SPARROW

2 Corinthians 13:11

When I was 13 years old, my friends and I decided that we were going to build a fort. But not any ordinary fort, an actual house! Now before you think that we had mad construction skills, this turned out to be a very small house, more like a garden shed into which all of us could fit as long as we were all standing up . But when we began construction, one of the fathers who was offering advice emphasized the importance of having a “cornerstone”. A starting point that would provide not just the foundational stability to the structure but also function as a guide to the direction of the build.

I think often when we enter into the time of Advent the theme of Peace can be the most challenging. While we may all be adamant that we wish to live a life of peace towards others, there is always the day to day grind of misunderstandings, sleights, errors in communication and relational difficulties to deal with. And that is just with our Christian brothers and sisters .

How are we to “be of one mind, live in peace”? A big question to ask ourselves is whether we are seeking to live a life of peace only during Advent or every day of the year? Are we open to the Holy Spirit fostering this Christ like attitude of Peace only during the month of December or do we consider this a foundational aspect of our Christian lives? As we move through the season of Advent, let us consider all of the weekly themes as not just aspects of the Christmas season, but, rather, more of a reminder of what should be foundational cornerstones of our Christian character, modeled upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.



peace

December 1st

We Seek Peace with Outsiders

FRANK SAWATZKY

Matthew 5:9

Around the Christmas dinner table in my house, the most commonly heard request is "pass the gravy". If your plate isn't swimming in gravy, you've failed to properly celebrate the birth of Christ. Okay... not quite. But seriously, we love our gravy and each year we crown the king or queen of gravy to the person who most thoroughly and precariously drenches their dinner plate.

Friendly competition like this is great, but what do you do about the more serious comparisons, disagreements, or conflicts that arise between your family, friends or co-workers? What happens when the relationship sours, when the marriage breaks down, when the friend you thought you had turns out to be more of an adversary? Do you avoid conflict, or do you make peace?

In Matthew 5:9, we read "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*" The Bible isn't referring to peacekeepers, that's easy... simply avoid ruffling feathers. But how are we to be peacemakers?

This is the one who seeks out conflict and initiates a type of resolution. Striving for reconciliation, a peacemaker builds bridges and actively pursues tense situations, working to tranquilize disturbances.

Seems crazy, right? Who in their right mind seeks out conflict? Today's world is ripe with discord. Any effort to address conflict and work toward reconciliation seems like a suicide mission. And when this involves you or the ones you know and love, it can be even more daunting. But Jesus made peace between us and God, and invites us to do likewise.

We are instructed by Jesus, equipped by the Spirit, and responsible to God to reflect the peaceable bond we have with Him toward others in our world--even the outsider. In humility, Jesus mediated between sinful mankind and the Holy God, and now offers us peace. Shouldn't we strive to demonstrate this peace to those around us?

You're encouraged to take some time this Advent season and reflect on how God has made peace with you. Ask Him to bring to mind the people that you should make peace with. Pray that the Spirit would fill you with truth and grace to navigate each conversation. Remember that Philippians describes this type of peace as one that transcends understanding and cannot be explained by human strength. It's divinely initiated, sustained, and carried out. And this Christmas, as you pass the gravy, do it peaceably.



peace

December 2nd

An Evergreen Peace

ANDREW GEDDERT

Isaiah 55:12-13

My favourite time of year has to be spring - the green grass shooting up fiercely through the brown earth, the buds and flowers blooming vibrantly in the streaming sunlight, and the birds repeating their sounding joy. It is the picture of new life, the resurrection and revival of things once buried under the harshness of winter.

The image that Isaiah conveys to the people of God in exile is the promise of a world that is so fully refreshed by the work of God that it seems as though the very rocks are singing praise. In this new creation, the trees are so nourished by this fresh renewal that their branches collide with one another in an applause-like fashion. The picture is one of creation liberated from its bondage (Rom. 8:21). We must remember that the promise of God's peace provided in Jesus extends to all creation, undoing every effect of the fall brought on by sin. God saw that *everything* He made was good.

Isaiah says that even “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” (Is. 11:6). This is the promise that every created thing longs to be fulfilled.

The promise of peace in Isaiah is not just one that unites creatures with enmity or restores life to a dying world, but it is also one that is as evergreen as the cypress and myrtle - Mediterranean trees that are always lush and alive in every season. They thrive in any condition as a testament to the peace that reigns eternal in Jesus. Though we see it now only in part, one day God Himself will come to dwell in the new creation and wipe away our tears and quiet the groaning of the earth. As the classic hymn so eloquently phrases it, “No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found.” He comes to make his blessings flow from one end of creation to the other; an everlasting restoration of things bent under the curse of sin and death - an evergreen peace that will neither whither nor fall (Is. 40:8).



peace
December 3rd

Too Soon?

JON PASUIK

Revelation 22:1-5

“Too soon?” This is one of the most relationally loaded questions in the English language. It highlights the fact that even after we’ve made peace and months, years or decades have passed, there is a risk that old wounds may be reopened by bringing up past events. This is why we don’t talk about that thing that happened over the last couple of years which shall not be named. You know what I mean.

This spring I took one of my boys on a tour of Pearl Harbor. I was a bit surprised that the guide recounting the events of the “Day of Infamy” and America’s response was Japanese - and not Japanese-American, but Japanese-Japanese. Whether or not his family had any connection to the events he was describing, I’m not sure; but he seemed to be able to talk about the facts of that horrendous war without any observable hesitation, pain, or shame. The way he spoke, it was evident that the peace that now existed between the one time belligerents was complete. The wound of hostility evidenced by all the artifacts of that war was healed. At one time, peace seemed impossible. Then peace came, but it seemed fragile. Then the peace became

resilient and it was not too soon to talk about what had happened.

In the midst of life in this broken world of broken relationships it is hard to fathom a time when the wounds of the past will be completely healed. It is hard to imagine that the phrase “too soon” will one day be obsolete and old wounds will no longer be capable of being reopened. However, the truth that God is making all things new brings with it the promise that every wound will be healed. The peace will be complete. Jesus’s first coming brought us peace with God and made peace between us possible. The season of advent sets our sights on Jesus’s second coming when peace will be total and complete.

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:

"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;

The Wrong shall fail,

The Right prevail,

With peace on earth, good-will to men."

-*"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"* by Henry Wadsworth



hope

December 4th

Hope for a Family

DANAE FRIESEN

Genesis 12:1-3

The classic Christmas tune, “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” was first written and recorded in the midst of World War II. It was written from the perspective of soldiers who were away from their families; the potency of their longing to be with loved ones particularly intense around the Christmas season. Still today, Christmas time remains deeply associated with family connections, for better or for worse. For many, the holiday music and seasonal decorations threaten to unlock pain that has been held at bay all year. And even for those who anticipate the joy of coming together, counting on the perfect Christmas moment often leads to disappointment: bad attitudes, bad behavior or bad food is all it takes. As much as family has become intertwined in our Christmas celebrations, it tends to let us down in one way or another.

When God first speaks to Abram, the families of the earth are in chaos. From Adam to Abram, the family portraits have been dismal. Cain killed his brother in a jealous rage, Lamech had multiple wives and

Noah cursed his own son for his shameful actions. Then God called Abram to leave behind his family which meant leaving all familiarity and also his inheritance. God sent him out with a promise that the kind of family *He* would give him would become a means for all the disastrous families of the earth to be blessed.

Many generations later Jesus, a descendant of Abram, would also be called out of his heavenly home. Like a soldier heading to the battlefield, Jesus came to accomplish a victory that would bring an end to all sin, death and dysfunction. He was the fulfillment of God's promise to Abram and became a blessing to all the people of the earth by inaugurating a new family line; we are now adopted by faith into the family of God.

Whatever family means for us this Christmas, let the ultimate hope that Christ has brought us into a new blessed family set our expectations in order. Let us long for more than snow and mistletoe, but for the home we were made for and have not yet seen. And while we wait, let's consider how this new family identity not only means we are blessed to be found among them, but also equipped by the Spirit to be a blessing to those around us.

hope

December 5th

Hope for an Oppressed People

JESSE SCHELLENBERG

Exodus 3:7-12

I was reading a story in the Mission City Record, this is the world renowned Newspaper in Mission, about a young man who had a terrible ATV accident. He was traveling down a logging road when he lost control, crashed into a fence and badly cut his leg. He was with his friends who quickly tried to stop the bleeding the best they could before they called emergency services in desperation. Once they got through they were told they would be put on a waitlist for an ambulance, in other words, help was not immediately on its way. The young man said that when he heard those words from his friends, he lost hope. He began to say his goodbyes and accept that this might be the end for him.

When we find ourselves in desperate need of rescue and no rescue seems imminent it leads to despair. The Israelites found themselves in desperate need of rescue. They were under the mighty hand of Pharaoh and had taskmasters placed over them who ruled them harshly.

The Bible says that they ‘afflicted heavy burdens on them’ and made their lives ‘bitter with hard service’ (Ex. 1:11,14), they were oppressed in every way. The Israelites were desperate, so they did what anyone would do, they cried out for help in desperation. Here was God’s response:

“I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them.”

As the young man was saying his goodbyes to his friends they got a phone call from the paramedics letting them know that they had dispatched an ambulance, help would be there soon. Hope was restored, rescue was coming and when they heard those words over the phone it changed everything, they went from saying their goodbyes to encouraging one another to keep fighting. This is what hope does, it keeps us from despair and encourages us to keep fighting. So remember Christian, God hears our cries, He has and will rescue us, we need not despair, rather let us encourage one another to keep fighting the good fight of faith with a sure hope in Christ our rescuer.

hope

December 6th

Hope for an Exiled People

EZRA OKOTI


Jeremiah 29:11

These are uncertain times, aren't they? The rate of inflation, rising interest rates, climate change, the war in Ukraine are a sampling of the challenges we face today. Local, national and international leaders are calling all of us to brace for a turbulent 2023 as we tackle these challenges and navigate the uncertain terrain ahead. When faced with uncertainty, complex challenges and difficult circumstances, Christians ought always to turn to the word for comfort and encouragement.

Jeremiah 29:11 is a powerful verse that offers hope and comfort to God's people. It says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." The nation of Israel was in captivity in Babylon. They had rebelled against the Lord by pursuing and worshiping idols. When called to repent, (see Jeremiah 4:1-4) the Israelites were "determined to worship idols" (Hosea 5:11 NLT). Therefore, the Lord sent them into exile as captives of Babylon.

While in exile, the Prophet Jeremiah offered hope to the Israelites. He reminded them that although they were facing difficult times, God had not forgotten them. Their welfare was a priority, and God had a plan that guaranteed a future and hope for them. Sure enough, after spending time in captivity, the Lord brought His people back to the promised land! (See Jeremiah 29:10-14; Ezra 1:1-10).

For us today, this verse offers hope because it reminds us that God is sovereign and in control. No matter what our circumstances may be, we can trust that our sovereign, benevolent God has a good plan for us! This is made possible because of the finished work of Christ on the cross. The “good news of great joy that will be for all the people...” (Luke 2:10) is that a saviour was born... a saviour whose death and resurrection secured redemption for all who believe in Him, thus guaranteeing them a glorious future. There is an appointed time when all our struggles, sorrows, and challenges will come to an end. “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.” (Rev 21:4). This is the hope and joy of Christmas! A saviour is born. Our future is bright!



hope

December 7th

Hope for an Unfaithful People

FRANK SAWATZKY

Hosea 11:1

The Bible is riddled with stories of hope, and we're instructed as believers to rejoice in this hope. Sounds easy, doesn't it? So why is it that during this amazingly crazy, wonderfully jam-packed, stressful time called "Christmas", do we forget to hope? I don't know about you, but I am so easily overwhelmed by the many festive commitments I have. There doesn't seem to be enough time in the day to complete my to-do list. And the combination of those sleepless nights, making sure ends meet, figuring out how all our guests can get along, and trying to find all the right gifts for everyone, results in my Christmas quickly slipping into a rejoiceless, daunting, stress-filled time. Where's the hope in that?

Maybe you're in the same boat as me? Maybe this time of the year becomes so overshadowed by chaos that you forget to hope. And just like Israel in Hosea 11, you act in unfaithful ways to the Lord.

Like me, does your focus shift from the Father to the faulty, from the Eternal to momentary, from the Holy Christ to some selfish pleasure?

Do your actions look a little more weary, broken, downcast, impatient, bitter, tired, or frustrated, than what it should look like to be filled with the Spirit? Welcome to the club.

The absurd truth in Hosea 11 is that although Israel was unfaithful, God was faithful. He called them, carried them, and prepared for them a future. And just like He did for the Israelites, He does the same for us.

Add up all our distractions, sins, and failure to hope in God, and we still have a faithful Father who offered His Son for us. We should be filled with wonder and amazement at the promise of our Savior. We should celebrate and rejoice that the promised Messiah and Deliverer has come to earth, and come for us!

- How has God been faithful to you despite your unfaithfulness?
- How has God been a constant refuge and comfort in times of distress, fear, or want?
- How have you witnessed the Hope of the Gospel?
- Has this hope in an unwavering God produced rejoicing and celebration? If not, maybe it's time for a re-frame.

I pray that during this Advent season, the Lord would provide you with strength and faithfulness to navigate the many demands of Christmas with hope.

hope

December 8th

Hope for Sinners

LUKE FRIESEN

Matthew 1:21-23

When I was a teenager, I did many dumb things. One of the dumbest things I remember doing was borrowing my dad's car and then trusting my friend while backing up so that I would not hit the tree that was clearly behind me. I was wrong to trust another 17-year-old! It ended up severely denting and scratching my Dad's favourite car. I told my dad what happened, and he told me not to worry about it. My Dad said not to worry about it because I do not have the skills to fix the car, and he does have the skills to fix the car: he would take care of everything. He and his friend ended up fixing the car, and I did nothing. I made the mistake, and my Dad fixed it.

I have made many more mistakes in my life, I have sinned plenty in this life. I know that I have not been a good person. I know that I am a sinner. Not only a sinner but a sinner who cannot get out of his sin. I don't have the tools to get out of my sin! But praise God, I do not have to stay that way!

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 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).

What Jesus has come to do is save sinners. For people who have understood their own depravity and need for something to change in their lives. If we look at our lives, we see that we are the problem. Yes, there are things outside of our control that happen to us and can make our lives difficult, but so much of the hurt and sin in our lives comes from our own decisions. This is the hope that Jesus gives, that He will save sinners. Jesus has come to save his people from their sins. God has become flesh and dwelt among us, and whoever believes that He is the son of God and puts their faith in Him will be saved. We do not have to deal with our own sins anymore. We have a saviour who has come to deal with them himself. What a hope in Jesus we have, the one who is capable to save us from our sins when we can't. Our sin and Jesus fixed it.

hope

December 9th

Hope for all Creation

JEREMY LAPOINTE

Romans 8:18-25

My wife and I are expecting our first child in a few months. I can't believe how excited I am to see my daughter for the first time. While this is expected of most parents, it genuinely came as a shock to me because I have been comically uncomfortable around young children, to the point where different friend groups have set up situations where I am forced to hold their children. Yet, here I find myself amazed at how much I have been longing to hold my little baby girl for the first time! However, before I get the privilege of holding my baby, I have seen my wife go through all sorts of hardships: increased tiredness, a decreased appetite, and morning sickness. She will also have to go through the "groaning of childbirth."

Paul writes that creation itself is "subjugated to futility" (ESV) or "frustration" (NIV) because it is in "bondage to corruption" (ESV) or "decay" (NIV) and it is therefore personified as experiencing the groaning of childbirth itself because of the curse of sin over it. Similarly, we can feel burdened by the power of sin over the world; we can be tired, worn out, or even feel stretched too thin, like an elastic

on the verge of snapping because of the effect of sin on us. We deeply long and groan for the world that is described in Revelation 20:4, where every tear is wiped away, death is no more, and crying and pain are passed away.

However, the agony that sin in this world produces is not the end. In the same way that the groaning from the pains of childbirth point to the hope of a new child, so too does our inward groaning from the curse of sin points to our hope in Christ. As my wife is a maternity nurse, she is painfully aware of the complications that may occur during pregnancy, we too know that our Saviour, the conqueror of death, is our hope and He will be victorious over sin. I challenge you to

look past the labour pains you might be facing this advent season, painful as they may be, to your hope in Jesus, who will make creation as it was supposed to be.

hope

December 10th

Hope in a Future Reality

CONNOR BELSHER

1 Peter 1:13

We have four cottonwood trees in our yard that tower over our house at 50 or 60 feet tall. During the summer months, they provide cooling shade and in the fall their leaves turn a beautiful array of yellow, orange, and red. In many ways, I love what these four trees bring to our property, but during the winter months, they terrify me.

Winter always seems to bring with it a few windstorms that rock our cottonwood trees until some of their massive branches break and come thundering down, piercing our lawn. My recurring nightmare is that during a windstorm, a whole tree would fall into our house and crush my family while we are asleep.

Well, this past November, my nightmare became a reality.

On a Friday night, my wife and I had put the baby to bed and were decompressing from the day. Just after 10 PM, we heard a loud crack and, a moment later, what sounded like a boulder landing on the

house sent picture frames crashing to the floor. In an instant, my nightmare filled me with dread. Was my daughter, Fable, crushed by a fallen tree? Did my nightmare suddenly come true?

I sprinted to Fable's room. I flung the door open and sweet relief filled me. The entirety of my worst nightmare was suddenly untrue. Fable, while frightened, was safe in her crib when I swept her up into my arms.

That moment of sweet relief is a taste of the future hope in Jesus. When we die and go to be with Jesus, or if He returns before then, the great hope we have is that all of our fears, anxieties, sickness, loneliness, and sadness will suddenly be untrue. The gloriousness of the grace of God through Christ is not simply that our sins are forgiven, it is that we get to enjoy the redemptive work of Christ in all things. Our current reality, the one in which sin has ravaged and caused deep emotional, physical, spiritual, and social pain, will one day be untrue.

So when we “set [our] hope on the grace to be brought to [us] when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming” 1 Peter 1:13b (NIV), we remind ourselves that one day the darkness and curse of this fallen world will be untrue. Sweet, sweet relief and unending joy will remain, as the abundant life will fill us for eternity.

joy

December 11th

Let the Heavens be Glad and the Earth Rejoice

JON PASIUK

1 Chronicles 16:31-34

In 2008, my wife and I visited Dachau concentration camp near Munich, Germany. Words cannot describe the scale and severity of suffering that happened there. It revealed humanity's capacity for the most horrendous inhumanity. Being there brought feelings of sorrow and shame that made it at times hard to swallow, and in some moments hard to breathe. In Romans 8:22 Paul describes all of creation as experiencing a visceral longing for freedom from corruption. That day we participated in that visceral longing.

And yet, when I remember that day, I also remember the fact that it was a perfectly clear summer day. The birds were singing. As much as it would have seemed appropriate for that scene to only exist in black and white, it was undeniably full of colour and life and if you had no idea what had taken place there decades ago, you might even think it was a nice place to have a picnic. It was dissonant. It seemed that all around us, creation was crying out that there is more yet to the story. In this place of humanity's utter self-ruin, God was pouring out life

and beauty. Creation is groaning in the pangs of childbirth waiting for its restoration, and yet God has never stopped pouring beauty and life into his creation. His power to sustain is greater than sin's power to corrupt. His commitment to His creation is resilient. His love endures forever.

In this broken world there will be moments of pain or grief when we feel like everything good and beautiful has been drained away. Yet creation bears witness to us in those moments that all is not lost. The Lord of creation reigns still, and He is coming to set us and the universe free from corruption.

joy

December 12th

The Joy of the Lord is your Strength

DOLLY OLIECH

Nehemiah 8:1-12

Excitement is in the air at Christmas time with lights and decorations, music and festivities. The world says it's the most wonderful time of the year, a time people should be the happiest. But for many, the season reminds them of who or what they do not have. What then gives true joy at Christmas?

In today's reading, Ezra the priest reads the Law of God to the gathered assembly by the rebuilt temple. This account takes place at a time in Israel's history after their exile, when a remnant had returned to Jerusalem. Being back in their land at the temple of the Lord should have been a joyful occasion. But as they heard the words of the Law, they wept. Why? They realized how far short of God's standards their lives had fallen. The people remembered their sin and it brought them to a repentant sorrow.

Instead of sitting in their grief of what they had done wrong, Ezra and Nehemiah told them they were to rejoice in what God had done. "This

day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep” (Neh. 8:10). They saw their sin but failed to see God’s mercy and grace. What was holy to the Lord should have resulted in joy because He is the true source of joy and gladness. In the end, they rejoiced because they had now understood the words that were being declared to them (8:12). It was a time to celebrate!

In that time, God had forgiven His people, but there would be a way that He would deal with mankind’s sin permanently through Jesus. That was the hope they had to look forward to, one we know because of the coming of the God’s Son that first Christmas. We rejoice in what God has done through Jesus! And in that, the joy of the Lord is our strength.

Where will you find your joy this Christmas season? Yes, enjoy the lights, festivities, time with family and friends. When plans fail, people disappoint, and gifts lose their luster, remember the greatest joy in this season: Jesus Christ. The joy of the Lord never disappoints. Look to Him for your strength. What a great reason to celebrate this season!

Romans 5:11, “More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

joy

December 13th

The Fullest of Joys

FREDY OROZCO

Psalm 16

I once heard a preacher draw a comparison between joy and happiness like this: happiness occurs when you are *reacting* to favorable circumstances, whereas joy is a *proactive* mental choice in any circumstance. Over time, the more I have reflected on this idea, the more profound it seems to me! However, there is one detail missing from this preacher's tagline. What is the *motivation* for the proactive decision to choose joy in any circumstance?

When we look at Psalm 16, we find the answer to this deep question about life. Joy is found not in simply choosing to think a certain way, but rather by choosing to dwell in God's presence. When we are near to God, it is there that we find not just joy, but the fullest kind of joy! Our proximity to God shapes our thinking in such a way, that all life is more joyous than we ever thought possible. The motivation for choosing joy is thus not found internally, but rather is found in the transforming presence of God. This is why Psalm 16:11 can make the boldest of claims by stating that in God's presence eternal pleasures can be found.

This is what makes Christmas the most joyous time of the year! In God's presence we can find lasting and satisfying joy, but who could journey towards God? No one! But in the Christmas story, we see that God journeyed towards us. Jesus of Nazareth is Immanuel, God with us, and when we put our faith in Him, we are able to begin to find eternal joy. This Christmas, there may be less circumstantial reasons to smile compared to last Christmas, but if you are walking with Jesus there is more reason than ever to find joy in the knowledge that God will never leave you nor forsake you, and in His presence there will be pleasures forevermore.

joy

December 14th

Angels bring Good News of Great Joy

SEAN HILDEBRAND

Luke 2:8-20

Take a moment with me to step back in time and put yourself in the shoes of these shepherds. Trying not to doze off as the night wears on, you are going about your regular routines of watching your sheep amidst the peaceful countryside of Judea. Nothing but the star lit sky and the gentle bleating of your sheep when you are suddenly blinded by the glory of an angelic being, bright as the sun. Imagine this happening if you were sitting at your desk at work, or looking after your kids at home! Fear would be a very understandable reaction to such an event.

But this heavenly messenger wasn't there to incite fear, but to bring "good news that will cause great joy." The word "good news" comes from the same word that we get the word "gospel" from. This heavenly messenger proclaimed the gospel, this joyfully good news, about a long awaited Savior. To add to the wonder of the moment, the announcement to this monumental event was first shared with a bunch of outcasts. That is what shepherds were often considered in

that day, unclean outcasts on the fringe of society. And God reveals to these outsiders that their Messiah has come to save everyone, even people like them. This King in a feeding trough was truly unexpected good news to them. And what it caused was joy. Overflowing joy. Joy that caused them to end up following in the angels footsteps by “spreading the word” of this glorious birth announcement to anyone fortunate enough to come across their path.

These shepherds had no special credentials, and as societal outcasts, they wouldn't have been very respected in what they had to share. But that didn't stop them and it didn't stop God. For as they shared this unexpected good news, God worked it to bring people to be “amazed” at what he was doing. Let's take our cue from these joyful shepherds this Christmas. Whether you are a new believer or a pastor for the last 30 years, we are all called to joyfully share the good news that we know and have experienced to those around us. So today, let's share like a shepherd!



December 15th

For the Joy set Before Him, Jesus...

ERIC HEATH

Hebrews 12:1-3

This year, I ran a half-marathon. Well, “ran” might be an exaggeration, but I *did* complete one. Just past the halfway mark of the fastest race of my life, I felt considerable pain as my leg seized up with what would later be diagnosed as a torn hip flexor muscle. Yet, determined (or perhaps stubborn) as I am, I hobbled the final five miles to the finish line, crossing it battered and bruised. Though the course did not go anywhere near as I had expected, I finished.

Perhaps your Christian walk, like my race, has not gone to plan. We read that “all things work together for good for those who love God”, and we (maybe subconsciously) expect that this guarantees “good”, on our terms, in the here and now. But, if this were the case, we would not need the exhortation in Hebrews 12:1, which tells us to “lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” Few people need encouragement to endure a pleasure cruise.

A call to endurance implies the existence of trials, challenges, and

obstacles to avoid. In the world, you will have tribulation.

So, if this life does not offer the assurance of peace and prosperity, to where, or to Whom, can we look? Hebrews 12:2-3 tells us. “Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

No human being would have written the story of Jesus the way it is recorded in Scripture. God on earth in the flesh, inviting many who were drawn by the Father, when all of a sudden He is arrested, tried, and executed, bearing upon Him the full wrath of God. Why? For the joy set before Him - the joy of eternal presence with the Father.

Brothers and sisters, it is this that we are to consider as we face the trials of this life. For our present race is preparing for us a weight of glory beyond all comparison - so, as you run, look to Jesus, the One who invites us to partake in His eternal joy.

joy

December 16th

Salvation Produces Inexpressible & Everlasting Joy

TAYLOR WICKENS

1 Peter 1:3-9

For many, Christmas is the best time of the year! The decorations, the lights, the music, friends and family are all great, but let's be real — we love the gifts the most. Think of the best gift you ever received for Christmas. Remember the joy you felt? The greatest Christmas present I ever got was an American Girl doll. I had been wishing for one of these dolls for years, and I finally had one of my very own! I was overjoyed and couldn't wait to play with my friends. I thanked my parents profusely, but could hardly express my excitement. But that happiness lasted for about a month. By the time February rolled around, I had forgotten about the doll and wanted something new. The treasures of this world never satisfy, just like my American Girl doll. They may offer temporary joy, but eventually, that joy fades. But what if there was a gift so great, that the delight it brought would never cease? A joy so profound, it's inexpressible.

That is the gift of our salvation! It's not something we deserve or earn, but by God's great mercy, we are born again and made into a new

creation. Through Christ's death and resurrection, we have received a heavenly inheritance that cannot perish, does not spoil, and will never fade. We receive the gift of God Himself. How marvelous is that?! Christians have reason to be the most joyful people there are. Even amidst grievous trials, our hope and our joy is set upon God's promised inheritance and Jesus' return. We will get to live in heaven with Him forever! This truth is better than any gift that will be under the tree this year. That is reason to rejoice.

Pay attention to where you seek your joy from this Christmas. If you didn't receive any presents this year, would Jesus still be enough? Is your rejoicing rooted in the imperishable inheritance kept in heaven for you? Friends, this Christmas season let us contemplate the greatest gift of all – the salvation of our souls. May our hearts overflow with gratitude, adoration and joy inexpressible.

joy

December 17th

Blameless Before His Presence

JULIE PUDLAS

Jude 24-25

You know that moment at a wedding, the moment at the very end, after the vows, the rings, the signing, the first smooch — that moment when the officiant says with great gusto, “presenting for the very first time, Mr. & Mrs. _____!” The cheers erupt as the applause swells, and the newlyweds take it all in as they walk back down the aisle hand in hand, husband and wife. The anticipation, the confetti, the JOY, all culminates in this moment!

Well, so too is our Bridegroom awaiting to be united with His bride, in all the fullness of the radiance of her beauty. There’s a day coming soon, when He himself will present His bride, who by His own hand He has preserved and perfected for that moment. And she will stand before His throne dressed in white, finally beholding the One she was created for. That Bridegroom is our holy God, and that bride is you and me, His church.

But it’s still a tension of ‘already’ and ‘not yet.’ Here and now, we’re in the ‘not yet,’ and haven’t reached the fullness of our eternal ‘already.’

The ‘not yet’ holds weight, and sin, and stumbling, and suffering, but there is a day coming when He will change all that. There is a day when our joy will no longer be in the shadows, tainted by the effects of sin within us, sin around us, and sin committed against us. There is a glorious day, just around the corner, when we will be filled with inexpressible great joy, as we are face to face with our Father, our Savior, our Friend, the Lover of our souls.

This Christmas, perhaps your joy is waning, thin, or threadbare and your story continues to have disappointment and fractures woven throughout it. Or perhaps the blessings are countless, and your cup spills over. Whether you find yourself in want or in abundance, this joy (or lack thereof), is just a foretaste of the heavenly perfection of joy you’ll possess when you gaze into the face of a Father who says “though your sins [were] like scarlet, they [are now] as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). Your garment of rags will be miraculously replaced with royal threads, fit for the marriage supper of the Lamb. The blood of Jesus will perfectly and thoroughly cover every act of rebellion that never even left your thoughtlife; every hidden, every public, every hint of sin, washed clean in exchange for a record without blemish. The moment we see Him, we will be made like Him. So to Him, this One who has kept you, is able to keep you, and will forever keep you until that day — to Him, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, this Christmas and forever! We don’t know when that day will come, but we know that it will come. So until that future joy is fully realized, until that wedding day arrives — press on, lean in, look up — our Bridegroom is returning soon, and the perfection of eternal joy awaits us all.

love

December 18th

Love is Core to God's Character

DANAE FRIESEN

Exodus 34:6-7

In most action movies, the story builds and things begin to fall into place, but then there is a point when all of a sudden everything goes terribly wrong. The enemy is more powerful than they thought, the strength of the hero is not enough, their resources are depleting and unless something changes drastically, there is no way forward.

In the middle of the book of Exodus, the Israelite people find themselves in such a moment. God had delivered his people from slavery in Egypt, they had made it through the Red Sea and to Mount Sinai to worship him. Yet as Moses was receiving God's instructions for His newly redeemed people, they began wildly pursuing idolatrous worship of a bull made of gold. In defiance of their deliverer, the people demonstrated that the rampant sin nature that had begun in the Garden, still persisted. God's display of power, provision and promises were clearly not enough to change the hearts of the people. There seemed to be no way forward, how could God possibly continue with them?

God's anger burned hot, but at Moses' intercession He relented. This whole experience led Moses to ask God, "Please, show me your glory" (Ex 33:18). It's as if he was trying to wrap his mind around who this God really was. God's response is one of the clearest proclamations from God Himself of who He most truly is. God declares that He is abundant in love that pours out in mercy, unmerited favour, patience and forgiveness. Yet, His divine pardon is not a sloppy excuse for sin, because those who continually prefer their sin over repentance will be held accountable.

This means that as Moses pleaded with God to show mercy and favour, he was merely agreeing with what God's nature was already inclined to do. This is the reason that the story of Israel could continue and find its ultimate resolution in Christ, the embodiment of God's steadfast love.

Today may feel like a crisis where there is no way forward. In the midst of both sin and suffering, we all have tendencies to put our trust in things other than God. However, God's heart of loyal love flows freely through Christ towards us. May this reminder of his love give us the assurance that our God will persist with us, and therefore our stories can move forward.

love

December 19th

God's Gracious Love for his People

TREVOR TOEWS

Deuteronomy 7:6-13

All of my life I have had a deep love for sports. I wanted to play as many as I could, but unfortunately, I am not an overly gifted athlete. I was good enough to make it to the last round of tryouts for most sports I wanted to play, but not always good enough to be chosen for the team. I remember one season when I did make a rep hockey team, I had to fight all year to prove that I belonged there, and that was deflating. It wasn't easy always feeling like I needed to earn my place. Thankfully, this isn't the reality that we are promised in Scripture. It's quite the opposite really. When Israel is standing on the edge of the promised land, as Moses encourages his people to remember the Lord, this is what he tells them: "The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set His love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that He swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery" (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).

Israel was not a great and wealthy nation when the Lord chose to bless them, but was suffering under slavery to Pharaoh. By no work of their own, but because of God's faithfulness to his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He brought Israel to freedom, to be His treasured possession. How incredibly encouraging is this! How wildly counter cultural. Israel did nothing to earn the favour of God, nothing to become treasured possessions. But it was God who called them and set them apart, and lavished them with grace, mercy and love.

The apostle Paul says that, because of Jesus, non-Israelites can join this covenant community (Romans 11:17), and we can experience this love. Through the work of Christ, and none of our own, we are adopted into the family of God, and we can enjoy the sweetness of God's love too, knowing that nothing can separate us from Him (Romans 8:38-39). What better time to be reminded of the love that God has for His people, then when we eagerly count down the days to celebrate the coming of the One who welcomes us into everlasting love.



December 20th

Love For The Sojourner

ANDREW GEDDERT

Deuteronomy 10:17-19

If you have ever traveled to a foreign country where people don't speak your native tongue, then you know the feeling of being an outsider, a stranger in a foreign land. What should be basic tasks become anxiety-inducing struggles. Ordering food from a menu, trying to navigate through unknown streets, and having to read unfamiliar road signs are challenging ordeals. Even something as simple as a greeting can be a point of potential embarrassment. Those who have left the familiarity of their own home know the disorientation of a strange land.

Woven throughout the history of Israel is the command given by the Lord to "love the sojourner" (Deut. 10:19). A sojourner is someone who is a temporary resident - an outsider just passing through. God commands this kind of love because Israel themselves were sojourners in the land of Egypt. Israel knew the feeling of being plunked into a totally unfamiliar and unfriendly setting, having to master a new language and fight for food and clothing. The repeated instruction to

Israel to love the sojourner has the flavour of Jesus' words in Matthew: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12). Basically, treat outsiders the way that you wished you had been treated in Egypt!

Loving the strangers among us both reflects the character of God and demonstrates an understanding of how it feels to be unfairly treated. We once were aliens and outsiders before God brought us into His family. He rescued us from under the cruel hand of sin, not because we were particularly lovable, but because He is love.

Should we not extend the same love to those around us that God has extended to us (1 John 4:19)? Should we not imitate our Heavenly Father in welcoming the foreigner to our family? Should we not meet strangers who don't speak our Christian language and can't read our theological traffic signs with gracious accommodation rather than scorn? Because the kind of accommodation that our God made for sojourners like us was to leave the riches of His heavenly throne, feed our undeserving and starving souls with his eternal bread, and clothe us in His own robe of righteousness.



love

December 21st

Two Worlds Coming Together in Jesus

JOSH RATZLAFF

John 3:16-18

Often we come to advent thinking we know the Christmas story. We know God's story of love for humanity and how God's Son came down as a baby born in a manger to a virgin in Bethlehem to bring God's love to the entire world. We know God loves the whole world—or at least ours.

Nicodemus, a head leader of the church of his day, knew all the stories. In John 3, Jesus shows Nicodemus that he didn't truly get it. Nicodemus knew God's story of love, but one thing he didn't understand was that Jesus was the Saviour for all people, bringing in all who believe and not just the faithful followers of Moses-Nicodemus' world.

In this festive season as we gather around friends and family, we often make it about what we love. We gather people around us we enjoy, with the hot chocolate recipe we chose in our cozy homes we decorated just right. In this way I find we can too often be like

Nicodemus and have our own little safe and warm separate Christmasy world distinct from the world at large. “The tree is done up just the way we like it, the presents we picked out will bring so much joy for our loved ones,” we say to ourselves, “ everyone will feel so loved because the Christmas world we set up for this great season is love, is so lovely, is so loving!”

We need to be careful to include God’s love for the world in our festivities around Jesus and not just what we enjoy. God loved the world, us included, enough to send Jesus out to bring condemned people in. No restrictions to Jew or Gentile: in our day no level of Bible knowledge, family tradition, nor how long they have been condemned with the world. Let alone their views of politics or their awkward social skills at dinner. We don’t have to discourage crafting our little Christmas havens of sweaters, lights, carols, angels, presents, and nativity scenes when we celebrate the greatest story ever told, but merely expand them. May our homes not **only** have Christmas cheer this year, but a God’s love for the world level of hospitality that brings people into the Christmas story we were brought into by God’s love. How will your beloved Christmas world bring in God’s story of love for the whole world this holiday season?

love

December 22nd

Jesus loved His own to the End

ALEX MARTIN

John 13:1-33

There is a story my mother likes to tell about a very hectic moving day. The day before her planned moving day, she found out there had been a miscommunication with her landlord and she now had only hours to move everything out and finish cleaning. The call went out to friends and family, anyone who could help. One Christian woman who stopped her day to answer the call, a stranger to my mother, took her cleaning supplies and went straight for the bathroom before anyone could stop her. She cleaned the sink, the tub, and even, on her hands and knees, the toilet which my mother assures me “was embarrassingly filthy.”

Jesus knew how His disciples would disappoint Him in the garden, knew how they would deny that they even knew Him, and knew how Judas, Judas who had walked with Him for three years, seen many miracles and even been given authority by Jesus to perform them himself, would betray Him. Jesus also knew his divine standing and rights as the Son of God, having come down from Heaven and having been given authority over everything.

The vast disparity between how He deserved to be treated and how they would treat Him, was crystal clear. But it says that He considered these men “His own” and He “loved them to the end.”

He humbled Himself further still. Despite being their Teacher and Lord, He washed their feet. Foot-washing was considered so degrading that many Jews thought it wrong to require a Jewish slave to do it. Imagine yourself there. Your teacher, who raises the dead, makes demons beg, and commands storms, strips to his underclothes like a slave, kneels at your feet while you sit, and takes your feet — caked with grime picked up from dusty roads mixed with sweat — cleaning them with His bare hands, wiping them with the towel tied to His body. It’s discomfoting. It’s humbling.

The Christmas story is about the same thing, about our Lord stooping down to us. About Him choosing to stoop down from Heaven, enter the helplessness of infancy, and walk on this dirty earth with us. More than that, God in Christ became a servant for us, and took our sin upon Himself.

This is the way that Jesus loved us. This is the way He commands us to love one another, our brothers and sisters in Him. “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” And it is to be our distinguishing mark. “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Let Jesus inspire us to not think that any act of service is beneath us.

love

December 23rd

What do you mean, “God is love?”

JOSHUA SCOTT

1 John 4:8-9

“God is Love”. I’m sure you’ve heard that verse before. Along with John 3:16, I’d venture to guess that it’s one of the most famous verses in the Bible. But because it’s so familiar, we tend to race past it assuming we know exactly what it means. So let me ask you a potentially strange question: who exactly does God love? The obvious answer would be “us”, right? Now, that may be entirely true, however it creates a bit of a problem. If God is love *only* because He loves us, then He actually needs us to exist in order to be loving.

Ok, bear with me. This might not be the kind of deep question you were expecting, but it’ll be worth it. Trust me.

So my parents have done an incredible job loving me and all three of my older siblings. They’ve never given me any reason to doubt their love for me or to wonder if the way they feel toward me might change. But imagine that I found out from my siblings that my parents were down-right mean until I was born. Yet for some reason, they suddenly

became gentle, generous and loving parents the moment they laid eyes on me (which of course, knowing me, makes complete sense). If that were the case, how confident can I be that they won't just up and change their minds again one day? If they changed from unloving to loving in the blink of an eye, what's to say they won't change back?

This is why it would actually be a scary thing to say that God is love simply because He loves us. Because there was an eternity before God created any human beings. If He needs us to be loving, then without us He would be unloving, and what's to stop Him from going back? What if these human beings became downright sinful? Uh oh.

No, the reason we can say "God is love" is because Jesus definitively revealed to us that the God we know is not a single-person God who was eternally lonely, but the Triune God who has eternally existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And in John 17:25 Jesus says to the Father, "you loved me before the foundation of the world". So before there were any human beings, God existed as a Father loving His Son in the Spirit.

Which means what, exactly? Well, if that's who He has been for eternity (ETERNITY! Let that sink in). Then how confident can we be that He won't change on us? No, He will be who He has always been. A God of love.

love

December 24th

Who Shall Separate us from His Love?

ARIELLE HLADY

Romans 8:31-39

From the beginning of the biblical narrative, we are discovering the story of men and of 2 trees, one brings death, the other life. Later, the reader faces another tree that will bear both death and ultimately eternal life. It is fitting to think that the choice of humans to eat from the forbidden tree in the first place; would ultimately lead to having the saviour of the world, God incarnate, be placed on a tree to die, for those who will eat from it, to have eternal life.

31 [...] If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will He not also with him graciously give us all things?

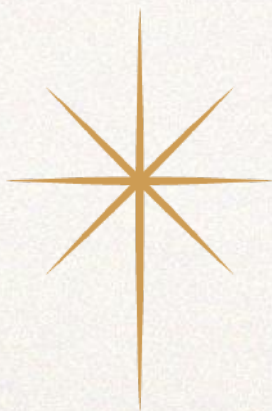
The display of God's unimaginable love on the cross is a story that starts with these trees, but also with a baby. For that very first Christmas day, that baby was sent to die on the tree for us

In the lyrics of the Christmas song called Heavenly Host, it is said:

“Let all the earth shout worthy worthy, Love has come to save us”. Let’s reply to this invitation by bringing praise to our Saviour. Let our work, our relationships, and our words declare God to be worthy of our praise. Today, on the 24th of December, take time to contact a family member, friend, or neighbour and care for them. Christmas is very near so pray for an opportunity to share with them the story of the trees, and of this baby in the cradle, about that love that has come to save them. And let’s lift our eyes to this God who shows His infinite love to us through His Son, a love so great that nothing and no one could ever separate us from.

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

December 25th



**merry
christmas**

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.

ISAIAH 9:6

This devotional was written by Northview Community Church Pastors & Staff. We hope this will be a year that you will grow deeper in your relationship and love for Jesus.

PEACE, HOPE,
JOY & LOVE
ADVENT
DEVOTIONAL