REFLECTION & PRAYER



HI CHURCH FAMILY, THERE ARE LOTS OF FUN THINGS DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON FOR MOST OF YOU. IT'S EASY DURING THIS SEASON TO BE DISTRACTED BY GOOD THINGS. SO WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON THE BIRTH OF JESUS THIS SEASON.

FROM DECEMBER 5TH FOR THREE WEEKS, THERE IS AN ADVENT READING, AND A SHORT REFLECTION THAT WAS WRITTEN BY EITHER MATTHEW BROWN, LUKE FRICKER, DANIEL WAUGH OR REBECCA FELLOWES.

THEN WE ASK THOSE TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS 'WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?' AND 'WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IN RESPONSE?'.

TAKE SOME TIME TO CONSIDER FOR YOURSELF FROM THE PASSAGE AND REFLECTION AS TO WHAT GOD MIGHT BE SAYING.

THERE IS ALSO A SUGGESTED PRAYER FOCUS.

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME EACH DAY TO REFLECT ON THE REAL REASON FOR A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AMIDST ALL THE OTHER FUN THINGS.

I THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH TIME AND ENERGY MANY OF US SPEND PLANNING FOR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS. WILL WE INVEST IN OUR SOUL AS WELL?

Monday 5th Reading: Matthew 1:1-17 Reflection

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT A LIST OF NAMES? WELL, A LOT IN THIS LIST! FIRSTLY, IT ASSURES US THAT GOD IS FULFILLING HIS PROMISE. DOING EXACTLY WHAT HE SAID TO ABRAHAM AND TO DAVID AND TO US. I ALSO LOVE THAT THIS LIST INCLUDES SOME SURPRISES FOR THE ORIGINAL JEWISH AUDIENCE. IT INCLUDES WOMEN AND FOREIGNERS. ALL ARE EQUALLY PART OF GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION. GOD CAN BE TRUSTED WITH HIS GREAT SALVATION PLAN. HE CAN BE TRUSTED TO DO WHAT HE SAYS IN YOUR LIFE. SO HAVE FAITH THAT GOD IS WITH YOU AND FOR YOU ALWAYS. HE HAS A GOOD PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE. HE CAN ALWAYS BE TRUSTED TO DO WHAT HE SAYS. A SONG THAT COMES TO MIND IS 'FOREVER GOD IS FAITHFUL!'

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Give thanks to God for his faithfulness to what he has promised. Pray for the confidence to always trust the promises of God, even when life is difficult.

Tuesday 6th Reading: Matthew 1:18-24 Reflection

THE CONCEPTION OF JESUS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, IS A VITAL CHRISTIAN BELIEF. IT MEANS THAT WE CAN SAY JESUS CAME AS BOTH HUMAN AND GOD. IT MEANS HE CAN REPRESENT US WHEN HE DIES AS A HUMAN. HE CAN RELATE TO US, AS HE EXPERIENCED OUR WORLD AND THE TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS THAT COME WITH IT. AS SON OF GOD, HE CAN TRULY BE THE PERFECT SACRIFICE. IF WE LOSE FOCUS ON JESUS' DIVINITY OR HIS HUMANITY, WE WILL MISS THE TRUTH OF WHO JESUS IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE. WHEN YOU REFLECT ON JESUS, OR PRAY TO JESUS, DO YOU FOCUS MORE ON HIS HUMAN OR DIVINE NATURE? A CHRISTMAS SONG WE SING SAYS THIS – FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN

HE COMES FOR ALL WITH OPEN HANDS. HE RULES WITH LOVE ON DAVID'S THRONE. ALL PRAISE BELONGS TO CHRIST ALONE

What is God saying to me?

What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Give thanks to Jesus for being our perfect sacrifice. Fully divine, and fully human. Pray for a deeper relationship with Jesus your Saviour.

Wednesday 7th Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Reflection

IT'S AMAZING HOW MUCH LEGEND HAS COME AROUND THE MAGI' THAT MATTHEW SPEAKS ABOUT. THERE IS NO REASON TO THINK THERE IS THREE OF THEM, THAT THEY WERE KINGS, OR WHAT THERE NAMES MAY HAVE BEEN. WHAT IS FOR CERTAIN HOWEVER, IS THERE FAITH, THEIR INSIGHT, THEIR WHOLEHEARTED SEARCH AND WORSHIP IS A CHALLENGE IN ITSELF FOR MANY OF US TODAY. HOWEVER, WHAT CHALLENGES ME WHEN I READ THIS DURING THIS FESTIVE SEASON IS THE DESIRE TO SEEK JESUS.

THE MAGI' TRAVELLED FAR AMONGST REALLY MASS GENOCIDE AND MANY OTHER ISSUES. YET AMONGST THE CHAOS SEARCHED AND DESIRED CHRIST.

HOW CAN WE SEEK JESUS IN THE STRUGGLE AND THE JOY?
IN THE BUSYNESS OF THE SEASON WE ARE IN. HOW ARE YOU SEEKING JESUS?

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: King Jesus, in the Joys and sorrow may I remember to seek you first.

Thursday 8th Reading: Matthew 2:13-18 Reflection

I WONDER HOW JOSEPH AND MARY WOULD HAVE FELT AT THIS POINT. THE MESSIAH HAD BEEN BORN TO THEM SUPERNATURALLY, MAGI HAD COME TO WORSHIP AND BROUGHT GREAT GIFTS, ANGELS HAD SPOKEN WITH THEM... YET THEY WERE ALSO FORCED TO FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES, TO HIDE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY AND BABIES WERE BEING SLAUGHTERED. GOD WAS SO CLEARLY AND SO POWERFULLY AT WORK, AND YET THINGS WERE SO FAR FROM BEING EASY OR "RIGHT".

HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED TIMES OF SIMILAR TENSION? HOW DO YOU COPE IN THESE TIMES?

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Ask god to reveal where he is at work around you, ask to see things through his eyes. Praise God for having a plan for you and ask that he guide and protect you.

Friday 9th Reflection

Reading: John 1:1-18

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THE FACT THAT JESUS EXISTED BEFORE THAT VERY FIRST CHRISTMAS?

THAT HE WAS THERE AT THE CREATION OF THE WORLD? TO ME, THIS ADDS AN EVEN GREATER SIGNIFICANCE TO THE BIRTH OF JESUS. HE ACTUALLY HAD TO GIVE UP HIS GLORIOUS AND RIGHTFUL POSITION WITH THE FATHER TO COME TO EARTH AS A HUMAN. TO MAKE HIMSELF A HELPLESS BABY THAT WOULD ONE DAY DIE IN OUR PLACE. WHAT KIND OF LOVE MUST HAVE MOTIVATED HIM? AS CHRISTMAS APPROACHES, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO REFLECT ON THE SHEER MAGNITUDE OF THIS ACT OF LOVE, WHEN JESUS CHOSE TO 'BECOME HUMAN AND MAKE HIS HOME AMONG US' ON THAT VERY FIRST CHRISTMAS.

What is God saying to me?

What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Take time to reflect on the love of Jesus and thank him for all of the ways he has demonstrated it.

Saturday 10th Reading: Philippians 2:5-11 Reflection

WOW, WHAT A BIG REQUIREMENT PAUL LAYS ON THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI – TO HAVE THE SAME ATTITUDE AS JESUS. THE SAME JESUS WHO CAME AS A BABY BORN IN A DISGUSTING MANGER, GREW UP IN FIRST CENTURY ISRAEL (WHICH I CAN'T IMAGINE WAS THE NICEST OF PLACES AND TIMES), WAS BETRAYED BY ONE OF HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS AND THEN DIED ON A CROSS, ONE OF THE MOST PAINFUL WAYS TO GO. ALL THIS BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT GOD'S PLAN WAS BEST AND HE WAS TO SERVE DESPITE HIS STATUS. AND WE ARE TO SOMEHOW HAVE THE SAME ATTITUDE? IN A WORLD THAT FEELS MORE BROKEN, SPLINTERED AND DISSENTING THAN EVER BEFORE, AND WE ARE TO HAVE A SERVANT ATTITUDE? THANKFULLY, WE HAVE JESUS' SPIRIT LIVING WITH US, HELPING US TO FULFIL SUCH A TALL ORDER.

What is God saying to me?

What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Ask God for preace and patience in the busy and silly season as we deal with terrible traffic, uncomfortable family membes and packed shopping centres. Ask for his love and mercy to fill us as we go about our day to day in the lead up to the celebration of Jesus' birth.

Sunday 11th Reflection

Reading: Isaiah 9:6-7

STOP AND THINK ABOUT THOSE TITLES FOR A SECOND. WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER AND PRINCE OF PEACE. WHAT BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR WHO IS SO DESERVING. EACH OF WHICH DESCRIBES A TRAIT OF GOD. HE'S OUR COUNSELLOR, HE IS MIGHTY, HE IS EVERLASTING AND PEACE IS FOUND IN HIM.

AS YOU REFLECT ON YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW AND HOW YOU ARE FEELING. WHAT IS IT YOU NEED FROM GOD? IS IT COUNSEL? MAYBE IT'S KNOWING THAT HE IS MIGHTY AND THE GOD THAT SCRIPTURE SAYS CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS. MAYBE IT'S KNOWING HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE AND ALWAYS WILL. MAYBE IT'S SITTING IN HIS PRESENCE AND KNOWING THAT HE'S IN CONTROL AND LETTING GO OF THE CRAZINESS OF LIFE.

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Find a space to sit where there are no distractions and for 10 minutes. Close your eyes and while breathing in, say a title of God that you need right now and while you breath out, ask that he will give what you need. Repeat with each breath for the next 10 minutes. For example Breathe in: Wonderful Counsellor, Breath Out: Give me wisdom, or Breathe in: Mighty God, Breath out: Give me strength



Monday 12th Reading: Matthew 6:19-21

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU GOT FOR CHRISTMAS LAST YEAR? I DON'T. HAVE YOU EVER SPENT WEEKS OR MONTHS EXCITEDLY SAVING FOR SOMETHING, DREAMING OF HOW GOOD LIFE WILL BE ONCE YOU GET IT, ONLY FOR IT TO HAVE LOST ITS APPEAL A SHORT TIME AFTER GETTING IT, INSTEAD BECOMING CONSUMED BY THE NEXT THING? IT CAN BE SO EASY FOR OUR THOUGHTS TO BE CONSUMED BY THE THINGS THAT WE WANT, WHETHER MATERIAL OR EXPERIENTIAL, AND IN DOING SO, MISS OUT ON WHAT REALLY BRINGS US JOY. THIS PASSAGE INVITES US TO STOP AND REFLECT. WHAT IS CONSUMING OUR THOUGHTS AT THE MOMENT? ARE WE WORKING TOWARDS WHAT GOD WANTS, WHAT WILL LAST, OR ARE WE WORKING TOWARDS WHAT WILL SATISFY US FOR A WEEK OR A MONTH?

What is God saying to me?

What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Praise God for his many blessings in your life. Ask that he help you steward both your finances and your time well. Reflect on how God would have you set your priorities this season.

Tuesday 13th Reading: Galatians 4:4-7 Reflection

CHRISTMAS IS NOT A JOYFUL OCCASION FOR EVERYONE. MANY ARE GRIEVING AND MISSING LOVED ONES WHO THEY WISH COULD BE THERE. OTHERS MAY FIND THAT CHRISTMAS LUNCH TOO OFTEN DIVULGES INTO CONFLICT OR COMPARISON. FOR SOME IT IS A SAD REMINDER THAT THEIR FAMILY IS FAR FROM PERFECT. WHEN WE READ GALATIANS 4, WE ARE GIVEN A DIFFERENT REMINDER THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS ARE ADOPTED INTO GOD'S FAMILY. WE ARE OFFERED A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PERFECT FATHER WHO LOVES US MORE THAN WE COULD EVER IMAGINE. BECAUSE OF THIS, WE ARE NEVER LEFT ALONE OF WITHOUT A FAMILY. WHAT A GREAT COMFORT THAT IS AS WE APPROACH THIS SIGNIFICANT TIME OF THE YEAR. WHAT WOULD A PERFECT FATHER LOOK LIKE TO YOU? HOW WOULD YOU INTERACT WITH HIM? WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT OR ASK HIM FOR? I ENCOURAGE YOU TO REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS AND TRY INTERACTING WITH GOD IN THAT WAY – AFTER ALL, HE IS OUR PERFECT FATHER.

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Ask God to reveal to you what it means to be in His family. Ask him for any peace or comfort you may need to get through Christmas this year.

Wednesday 14th Reading: Luke 1:26-38 Reflection

AS WE LEAD UP TO OUR CELEBRATIONS OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, I OFTEN WONDER HOW MARY AND JOSEPH HANDLED EVERYTHING GOING ON SURROUNDING THIS MOMENTOUS OCCASION? HAVING A CHILD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BABIES LEAPING IN WOMBS, PROPHECIES AND JOYOUS PRAISE OF GOD, JUST FROM THE PRESENCE OF A FOETUS. ALL OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A WILD EXPERIENCE TO MARY AND JOSEPH! WOULD I LIVE MY LIFE WITH AN UNRELENTING JOY KNOWING THAT NOTHING BAD CAN HAPPEN TO MY CHILD UNTIL HE FULFILLS WHAT GOD HAS CALLED HIM TO? OR WOULD I LIVE IN FEAR KNOWING WHAT WAS TO COME FOR YOUR FIRSTBORN SON?

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Pray for the joy and excitement that Anna had. Give thanks to God for the certainty that we now have, that Mary, Joseph and the others living out the bible story didn't have.

Thursday 15th Reading: Luke 1:39-45 Reflection

IMAGINE BEING ELIZABETH. GOD HAS DESTINED YOUR UNBORN CHILD FOR GREATNESS, AND THEN MARY ROCKS UP TO YOUR PLACE AND YOU ARE IMMEDIATELY PUT INTO SECOND PLACE. EVEN YOUR UNBORN CHILD IS CELEBRATING WHAT MARY WAS GIVEN. HOW NATURAL WOULD IT BE TO REACT WITH JEALOUSY OR DISAPPOINTMENT AT WHAT GOD HAD GIVEN YOU, OR THAT MARY WAS GIVEN A GREATER HONOUR? AND YET THAT'S NOT HOW ELIZABETH REACTED. ELIZABETH WAS GLAD AND FELT BLESSED TO RECEIVE MARY AND HER UNBORN CHILD INTO HER HOME.

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Pray for the ability to receive other people's good news as though it was your own. When someone gets annual leave, a great holiday or better presents than you.

Friday 16th Refection

Reading: Luke 1:46-56

ONE OF THE CANDLES IN THE ADVENT SEASON IS THE CANDLE OF JOY. MARY CERTAINLY FOUND HER JOY IN GOD. JOY IS ONE OF THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT WE SHOULD ALL DISPLAY. MAYBE WE CAN'T ALL RELATE TO CARRYING THE SON OF GOD! HOWEVER, WE SHOULD FIND OUR JOY IN GOD, WHAT HE HAS DONE, AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR US. WE SHOULD FIND JOY IN THE PLAN GOD HAS FOR OUR LIFE. I THINK ABOUT HOW OFTEN MY JOY CAN JUST FOLLOW THE TEMPORARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE. SATAN, THE JOY-STEALER CAN SOMETIMES SO EASILY ROB ME OF WHAT I HAVE THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT. AT THIS STAGE OF THE STORY, MARY ONLY HAD A PROMISE. HOWEVER, SHE TRUSTED IN THE PROMISES OF GOD AND FOUND HER JOY. HOW EASILY IS YOUR HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN JOY TAKEN FROM YOU? WOULD PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU SAY YOU ARE JOYFUL?

What is God saying to me?

What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Celebrate God and his goodness. Pray that the Holy Spirit joy you have would flow strongly, even on difficult days. Pray against Satan's plan to steal your joy.

Saturday 17th Reading: Luke 2:1-7

Reflection

II LOVE HOW THIS PASSAGE IS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL REMINDER OF OUR HISTORY OF FAITH. IT REMINDS ME OF WHAT PAUL SAYS IN 2 TIMOTHY 1:5 "I AM REMINDED OF YOUR SINCERE FAITH, WHICH FIRST LIVED IN YOUR GRANDMOTHER LOIS AND YOUR MOTHER EUNICE AND, I AM PERSUADED, NOW LIVES IN YOU."

I AM SO THANKFUL THAT I JUST AS LUKE, TIMOTHY AND SO MANY OTHERS HAVE BEEN APART OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND ITS RICH HISTORY. AS YOU CELEBRATE THE FAITH YOU HAVE, AND THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR, REFLECT ON WHO HAS BEEN APART OF YOUR JOURNEY OF FAITH AND MAYBE ASK WHO ARE YOU INVESTING IN OR CAN INVEST IN SO THEY MAY ALSO BE A PART OF THE RICH HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AND ENJOY THE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP OF JESUS.

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: God, thankyou for those who have been a part of my story. Lord may you give me opportunities to be in others.

Sunday 18th Reflection

Reading: Luke 2:8-24

IT'S IRONIC THAT THE SHEPHERDS WITNESSED SUCH A GREAT DISPLAY IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE MESSIAH, AND YET THEY DIDN'T FIND THE MESSIAH IN A PALACE, HE WASN'T BORN A PRINCE, CROWDS HADN'T GATHERED AND THERE WAS NO CHOIR OF ANGELS PRESENT WITH HIM. NO, WHAT THEY FOUND WAS A CHILD IN A MANGER (A.K.A. AN ANIMAL FEEDING TROUGH). THIS IS OFTEN THE WAY OF THINGS WITH GOD'S KINGDOM. THE THINGS OF GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE CAN SEEM SO SMALL AND MUNDANE, AT TIMES EVEN EASY TO OVERLOOK. IMAGINE WHAT THE SHEPHERDS COULD HAVE MISSED OUT ON IF THEY HAD THOUGHT "SURELY THE MESSIAH COULDN'T BE THIS HUMBLE CHILD". WE ARE TOLD THAT MARY TREASURED WHAT SHE HEARD FROM THE SHEPHERDS AND PONDERED THEM IN HER HEART. WHAT IN YOUR LIFE MIGHT YOU BE FAILING TO FULLY APPRECIATE? IN A WORLD WHERE IT IS SO EASY TO BE DISTRACTED AND DISCOURAGED, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO SPEND TIME PONDERING?

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Praise God for the birth of Jesus. Praise him for the gracious way he uses those who are weak and humble to do great things. Ask that he might help you ponder what is good, rather than dwell on the bad. (see Phil.4:8)



Monday 19th Reflection

Reading: Luke 2:25-35

JESUS WAS BORN IN FULFILMENT OF A PROPHECY THAT THE JEWS HAD BEEN WAITING FOR CENTURIES. HE WAS THE PROMISED MESSIAH, BORN TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM THEIR SINS. SIMEON WAS SOMEONE WHO HAD BEEN WAITING HIS WHOLE LIFE TO SEE THE MESSIAH. IMAGINE HOW INCREDIBLE THAT MOMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR HIM! GOD NOT ONLY FULFILLED THAT PROMISE TO SIMEON BUT ALSO TO THE WHOLE WORLD WHEN JESUS WAS BORN. ARE YOU WAITING ON GOD TO FULFIL ANY OF HIS PROMISES?

ARE YOU DOUBTING THAT HE WILL KEEP HIS WORD? THIS IS A POWERFUL REMINDER THAT GOD ALWAYS FULFILS HIS PROMISES, EVEN WHEN HIS TIMING MAY BE WILDLY DIFFERENT TO OUR OWN.

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Thank God for never failing to keep his promises. Ask for strengthened faith and patience as you wait on Him.

Tuesday 20th Reading: 1 Timothy 1:15-17 Reflection

YOU PROBABLY KNOW THE SAYING 'WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT'. IT IS A SAYING THAT RECOGNISES THE SAME SITUATION A GROUP OF PEOPLE ARE IN. I'M REMINDED AS I READ THIS PASSAGE IN 1 TIMOTHY, THAT WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT. ALL IN NEED OF A SAVIOUR. I LOVE HOW ONE THE GREATEST CHRISTIANS I KNOW, THE APOSTLE PAUL, RECOGNISES HIS OWN NEED FOR JESUS. WE SHOULD BE VERY CAREFUL THAT WE DON'T JUST SEE THE SIN IN OTHERS. WE MUST ALSO CONSTANTLY RECOGNISE OUR OWN NEED FOR THE FORGIVENESS THAT COMES ONLY THROUGH JESUS. RECOGNISING HIS SIN DIDN'T CAUSE THE APOSTLE PAUL TO DROWN IN HIS MISERY. INSTEAD HE WORSHIPPED OUR GOD OF MERCY! CHRISTMAS IS A TIME TO CELEBRATE GOD'S GRACE, REMEMBERING I AM IN THE SAME BOAT.

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Recognise your own need for forgiveness. Give thanks to God for his mercy. Maybe pray through v17 as a prayer of thanks.

Wednesday 21st Reading: John 12:20-27

Reflection

WELCOME TO ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF SCRIPTURE. I'M SURE YOU WERE FILLED WITH JOY AT THE STATEMENT OF "ANYONE WHO LOVES THEIR LIFE WILL LOSE IT, WHILE ANYONE WHO HATES THEIR LIFE WILL KEEP IT FOR ETERNAL LIFE." CAN I GET AN AMEN!!! IF WE JUST READ THIS VERSE WITHOUT VERSE 26, IT CAN BE HARD TO SEE WHAT JESUS IS REALLY GETTING AT. OUR LIVES ARE TO BE AN ACT OF WORSHIP TOWARD GOD'S GLORY. ISAIAH 43:21 SAYS "THE PEOPLE I FORMED FOR MYSELF THAT THEY MAY PROCLAIM MY PRAISE. THE MEANING OF LIFE ISN'T 42 IT'S 43. BIT OF A HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY JOKE;). WHEN YOU LOOK AT YOUR LIFE. HOW MUCH OF IT IS BRINGING GLORY TO THE KINGDOM, AND HOW MUCH IS BRINGING GLORY TO THE WORLD? WE CAN WORSHIP GOD BY GOING TO WORK AND WATCHING THE DRAGONS WIN A GRAND FINAL. WORSHIPPING GOD CAN BE DONE IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIFE. BUT SO CAN WORSHIP OF THE WORLD. IF YOU WERE TO WRITE DOWN ALL THINGS YOU DO THIS WEEK, HOW MUCH IS SERVING GOD AND HOW MUCH IS SERVING THE KING OF KINGS?

What is God saying to me?

What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Christ teach me to put you first in all I do

Thursday 22nd Reading:Revelation 19:11-16 Refection

WE LIVE IN A MOMENT WITHIN SALVATION HISTORY WHERE WE CAN BE SO CLOSE TO GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING WITHIN US. YET OUR WORLD IS STILL SO BROKEN AND SO OFTEN WHAT IS MEANT FOR GOOD GETS TWISTED INTO SOMETHING HARMFUL. AS MUCH THE COMING OF JESUS SET US FREE FROM SIN AND DEATH, THAT FREEDOM IS NOT FULLY REALISED. YET WE KNOW THAT GOD'S PLAN DIDN'T FINISH WITH JESUS' FIRST COMING, WE KNOW THAT THE DAY WILL COME WHEN JESUS AND HIS ARMIES WILL WAGE THE FINAL WAR ON SIN, WE KNOW THAT THE BIRTH OF JESUS GUARANTEES THAT HE WILL COME AGAIN AND SET THINGS RIGHT. WE ALSO KNOW THAT THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IN THIS SPIRITUAL WAR, THE WORD OF GOD (PICTURED HERE AS THE SWORD COMING FROM JESUS' MOUTH – SEE HEB 4:12-13), IS ALREADY AT OUR DISPOSAL. LET'S MAKE SURE WE USE IT.

What is God saying to me?

What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Ask God for comfort and insight as we seek to understand his plans for us. Ask for patience and grace for one another as we wait for Jesus' return. Ask that he help us to understand, be shaped by, and put to use.

Friday 23rd

Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15

Reflection

AT CHRISTMAS WE CELEBRATE JESUS FIRST COMING DOWN TO EARTH. THIS ALSO REMINDS US THAT HE WILL COME AGAIN ONE DAY, BUT THIS TIME IN MIGHTY POWER INSTEAD OF COMING HUMBLY AS A CHILD.

JESUS COULD RETURN RIGHT NOW IF HE WANTED TO, BUT INSTEAD HE IS WAITING FOR AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE TO BE SAVED. HIS COMING 2000 YEARS AGO AND HIS DELAY IN RETURNING BOTH HIGHLIGHT THE PASSION AND LOVE THAT JESUS HAS FOR THE LOST. HIS HEART IS FOR ALL TO BE SAVED. HOW MUCH DO YOU CARE ABOUT THE LOST WHO DON'T KNOW GOD? WHO CAN YOU REACH OUT TO OR BE PRAYING FOR THIS CHRISTMAS? CHRISTMAS IS A WONDERFUL TIME TO REFLECT ON THE REASON JESUS CAME TO EARTH AND WHO IN YOUR LIFE MAY NEED TO HEAR THE GOOD NEWS OF HIS SALVATION.

What is God saying to me?

What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: Pray for any people of peace in your life and ask the Holy Spirit to prompt you in ways you can reach them this Christmas

Saturday 24th

Reading:John 3:16-17

Reflection

AS CHRISTMAS DAY IS ALMOST UPON US, ANTICIPATION OFTEN LEAVES US SCRAMBLING FOR PERFECTION. WE ARE SO CONSUMED BY PREPARING THE PERFECT MEAL, ORGANISING BOTH SIDES OF THE FAMILY AND FINDING THE PERFECT GIFT FOR THAT SPECIAL, ALBEIT DIFFICULT TO SHOP FOR PERSON. INSTEAD OF PEACE ON EARTH, WE ARE LEFT TIRED AND BURNT OUT. NO MATTER HOW HARD WE TRY, THERE IS ALWAYS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE CHRISTMAS ROAST MIGHT BE BURNT, WE MIGHT NOT SEE EVERY LOVED ONE AND THERE IS ALWAYS THE CHANCE THAT DAD DIDN'T WANT YET ANOTHER SET OF NOVELTY SOCKS. ALL THIS STRESS, ANXIETY AND CHAOS LEAVES US YEARNING FOR SOMETHING SIMPLE, SOMETHING WE DON'T NEED TO WORK FOR. WHEN PEACE IS SOMETHING YOU ARE CAROLLING ABOUT BUT NOT FEELING, IT PAYS TO REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THE SEASON. EVEN THOUGH JOHN 3:16 IS ARGUABLY THE MOST WELL-KNOWN PASSAGE IN THE WORLD, IT IS EASY TO FORGET THAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE MOST PERFECT GIFT THAT HAS EVER BEEN GIVEN. INSTEAD OF BEING CONDEMNED BY OUR FAILURES (WHETHER THEY BE AS SMALL AS A BORING CHRISTMAS PRESENT OR AS LARGE AS A LIFE OF SIN) WE ARE BLESSED WITH ETERNAL LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF OUR SAVIOUR. WE ARE NOT FORCED TO BUSY OURSELVES, MAKING OUR LIVES PERFECT ENOUGH TO PLEASE NOT ONLY OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES BUT ALSO OUR GOD. NO, WE ARE TOLD THAT AS LONG AS WE BELIEVE, WE ARE SAVED.

What is God saying to me? What do I need to do in response?

Prayer Focus Suggestion: As you finish your last munute Christmas preparations tonight, take some time to be still and reflect on the perfect gift we have been given. Praise God for sending his son to give us the gift of eternal life.





This Advent Reading was created for Swansea District Baptist Church 2022.
Anyone who wishes to use this is welcomed, but please do not change it.