

Advent

daily devotionals of hope, joy,
peace, & love.



Welcome



This Advent devotional is designed to give a daily space for connection with God as we prepare for the holy day of Christmas! Every day will include silence and stillness before God, a short scripture and devotional, and time to reflect and pray. Our prayer would be that you approach every day not to get something from God, but to simply be with Him. Every week revolves around a traditional Advent theme of HOPE, JOY, PEACE, and LOVE.



BibleProject Videos

This year we are partnering with the BibleProject to help introduce us to our weekly advent themes. Each week's devotions will begin with a QR code that when scanned, will take you to a link where you can watch the BibleProject video for that week's advent theme.

Visio Divina

Sprinkled throughout the weeks are several Visio Divina ("divine seeing") devotionals, an ancient practice of reflection by the use of visual imagery. In the same way someone can walk into an art museum and have a "spiritual" experience looking at a beautiful sculpture or painting, we trust that God has made us to enjoy and appreciate beauty through various creative expressions. We also have included in these devotionals, unique pieces of art from the BibleProject artists that give us a unique expression of the themes of advent.

Christmas Carols

There are also four devotionals written about well known Christmas carols. You may want to play or sing these on your own, and we hope it will give you a new appreciation for the time in history, the artist, and the lyrics and music that were inspired.



We hope you enjoy these creative experiences!
Happy Advent & Merry Christmas!



Week 1

- Hope -

*Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.
Salvation is of the Lord.
Salvation is of the Christ.
May your salvation, Lord, be ever with us. Amen.*

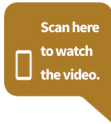
-St. Patrick of Ireland



Sunday, Nov. 28th



BibleProject Video



Reflection for Sabbath

“Sabbath time can be a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork, mindless accumulation, and the endless multiplication of desire, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity... Sabbath honors the necessary wisdom of dormancy...a time to remember to celebrate what is beautiful and sacred.” (Wayne Mueller)

Sabbath includes important elements that set it apart from a normal day off: **rest** (mind, body and spirit), **delight** (remembering what brings you joy), and **worship** (connecting deeply with God).

How will you rest today?

How will you delight today?

How will you worship?



Monday, Nov. 29th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

1 In you, Lord my God, I put my trust. 2 I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. 3 No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause. 4 Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. 5 Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. 6 Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good. 8 Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. 9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. 10 All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant. (Psalm 25)

Devotional: This Psalm was written by David later in his life. There is something about age that gives us perspective. I remember asking my grandfather on his 95th birthday what wisdom he could offer me. He grinned and with a tender gaze said, “My dear, you already know - love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.” It took me off guard and I felt tears well up in my eyes. I don’t know what I expected, but here was a man late in his life who had experienced the loss of his own mother at an early age and the loss of his 2-year-old child. He had lived through wars, the Great Depression, and watched all his siblings and wife pass before him.

He was a man who knew suffering and yet this was his wisdom to me, so simple and timeless. The Psalmist says, “Remember your great mercy and love, for they are from old.” The Lord is timeless, and His love is ancient. As we enter Advent this year, after such a trying season, let us remember that we put our hope in an eternal God. And He can meet us in our sufferings and our longings. His timeless, ancient love brings us hope.

Reflection: Can you remember a moment in the past where God’s mercy and love felt tangible for you? How does that memory bring you hope today? Can you ask the Lord to reveal His great and ancient love for you right now, in this moment?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Tuesday, Nov. 30th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:22-25)

Devotional: A few years ago I heard a TED talk by Angela Duckworth about the human characteristic of “grit.” She defined it as a combination of passion and perseverance in a person towards a singular important goal. I have always found it interesting when I watch someone go through the most extraordinary of circumstances and still trust God, ultimately keeping their faith intact. Then I watch someone go through something that seems trivial (a bad grade on a test or they have a bad day at work) and they blame God and their faith crumbles. Why is that?

The scriptures speak of having spiritual “grit” in our faith while hoping for the redemption of the world. Jesus talks about a spiritual and physical waiting and being fiercely faithful to God; Paul writes letters exhorting churches to be perseverant and to be patient. Both of them speak of waiting for God’s eternal redemption of a broken world, but also an acknowledgement that we will be tempted with lots of opportunities to lose sight of what God is doing. We tend to grow discouraged and give up way too soon. Creation groans, our bodies break, relationships are hard.

Waiting is hard and takes supersized patience for many of us! Waiting reveals how immature we are or how quickly we settle or find something to secure us. But when we truly wait, putting all our trust in Jesus, we understand more of how our faith was designed. It’s like watching race horses with blinders on their faces so they can only see what is in front of them and not be distracted. This Advent season is an invitation to trust in the unseen work of God and commit our lives once again to His plan.

Reflection: Where are you observing the “groans of the world” around you or in you? How does this distract or affect you? Spend a few minutes interceding for God’s redemption and reconciliation to come.

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Wednesday, Dec. 1st



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

Visio Divina: Center yourself by taking a deep breath and relaxing your body as best you can. Allow your shoulders to lower away from your ears. Let your arms rest in your lap and let your feet be fully supported by the floor. Feel the weight of your body held by the chair. Spend this time in quiet. Open yourself up to God's voice.

Brief pause.

Take a deep breath in and out. Continue breathing deeply as you read the image. In this moment, simply notice the visual qualities of what you see: colors, line, shape, form, space, and texture.

Brief pause.

Now, take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to? What parts of the image did you quickly brush by or overlook? Observe your own emotions. How does this image make you feel?

Brief pause.

Imagine yourself in this piece. Identify some places in your life where you are waiting for reconciliation and/or in need of hope. Are you allowing yourself to dream for restoration and hope for these situations? How does it feel to know God is with you in the waiting? Ask the Holy Spirit to bring comfort in places where you have given up hope.

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Wednesday, Dec. 1st



Thursday, Dec. 2nd



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

11 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. (Romans 13: 11-14)

Devotional: When I read this scripture, I was immediately reminded of my personal response during the pandemic. Initially when we started quarantine with stay at home orders, I started to think about all the things I could do in the ample time we were given. I went into major planning mode! I also vowed to do yoga everyday...which...lasted all of three days.

Once the reality of the situation set in, I realized I was working through the different stages of grief, which are denial and isolation, anger, bargaining and depression. I started to slip back into old ways of being. I stopped spending time with God, and I started to look to things to numb out the pain. It wasn't until I finally was able to accept the situation that I was able to think a little clearer.

I remember finally spending some time with God and He very lovingly showed me a vision of how He was moving during this time. He was in every home and with all His people. I felt so comforted. I finally woke up from my slumber.

Romans 13:11-14 can feel disciplining, but when we read this through the lens of God, we see how loving and compassionate He is to us. Even though I felt so much shame, He was gently loving me and staying right by my side.

I wonder if any of you are feeling shame about something. I get it. This scripture is a reminder of God's unconditional love and forgiveness for us, and his promise to never leave us nor forsake us. My prayer for us is to find hope in this season, clinging to this promise.

Reflection: When you reflect on the past few months, how have you seen God moving in your story? What would it look like to lay down your shame and receive God's tender forgiveness?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Friday, Dec. 3rd



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

2 In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. 3 Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. 5 Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord. (Isaiah 2:2-5)

Devotional: In Isaiah's day, people were walking away from God and abandoning their faith. It's not too different from what's happening in the American church today. For me, it can be so discouraging to watch friends walk away from the church and from God.

When it would be just as easy to lose heart, Isaiah teaches us to hope. He anticipates a different future when the Lord's throne is elevated above all others and "many peoples" will be drawn to the good news of God's kingdom. Pause and let that thought sink in for a moment – in a discouraging time, when people are fleeing from faith, Isaiah sees a future where people are rushing to God's Kingdom to learn a different way of life.

For years, when I pray for my kids before school, I pray, "God, let them be different." It's worth considering how our lives might be different because of Jesus' coming.

In this passage, hope and mission intersect for Isaiah. He highlights three ways of living differently that will draw "many peoples" to God. First, people will be drawn to God's teachings that actually produce a unique way of life in people. Second, people will be drawn to justice (judging between the nations). Too often we mistake judgement in the Bible to be some cosmic courtroom scene. But it's probably better envisioned as a repair shop, where God is repairing what's been broken. Finally, Isaiah says people will be drawn to the peacemakers.

At the end of the passage, Isaiah's hope is rooted in a group of people accepting the invitation to walk in the light of these things. What if the hope of the world is that Jesus has come to teach us and enable us, by His grace, to live like him, seek justice, and be people of peace?

Reflection: How are you living differently in light of Jesus' coming? What difference does He make in your life? Does your life communicate hope to your family, friends, and neighbors?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Saturday, Dec. 4th



Christmas Carol Devotional

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight
For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth
How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him still
The dear Christ enters in
O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel



Saturday, Dec. 4th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

April 23rd, 1865 Abe Lincoln's memorial service was held at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, after nine days of shock and horror at his assassination. There were roughly 500,000 people lined up to observe the service, but 13 blocks away at Holy Trinity there was another eulogy being given by the noted Episcopal reverend Phillip Brooks on the memorable life of Abraham Lincoln. As a pastor, he solemnly carried the weight of pastoring a community of people through a great trauma.

Eight months later, an exhausted and weary Brooks took a trip to Israel. He was mesmerized by the services held at the Church of the Nativity in the little town of Bethlehem. He was weary from the horrors and length of the Civil War and the brutal death of a beloved President. He looked at the shepherds that still were watching sheep, and was moved by the Christmas story in a new way. Three years later, he wrote about this Holy Land experience for the children in his church and they LOVED it! Louis Redner, the church organist, was tasked with putting the lyrics to song and was quoted saying,

"Mr. Brooks came to me on Friday, and said, "Redner, have you ground out that music yet to 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'?" I replied, "No", but that he should have it by Sunday. On the Saturday night previous, my brain was all confused about the tune. I thought more about my Sunday-school lesson than I did about the music. But I was roused from sleep late in the night hearing an angel-strain whispering in my ear, and seizing a piece of music paper I jotted down the treble of the tune as we now have it, and on Sunday morning before going to church I filled in the harmony. Neither Mr. Brooks nor I ever thought the carol or the music to it would live beyond that Christmas of 1868."

Reflection: Have you ever spent several minutes imagining the story of Christ's birth, thinking slowly through the events that happened? Not only reading the story, but using all the senses to imagine? This is a powerful exercise that can potentially move us in a fresh way. Make space today to try this!

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Week 2

- Joy -

My God, let me know and love you, so that I may find my happiness in you. Since I cannot fully achieve this on earth, help me to improve daily until I may do so to the full. Enable me to know you ever more on earth, so that I may know you perfectly in heaven. Enable me to love you ever more on earth, so that I may love you perfectly in heaven. In that way my joy may be great on earth, and perfect with you in heaven.

O God of truth, grant me the happiness of heaven so that my joy may be full in accord with your promise. In the meantime let my mind dwell on that happiness, my tongue speak of it, my heart pine for it, my mouth pronounce it, my soul hunger for it, my flesh thirst for it, and my entire being desire it until I enter through death in the joy of my Lord forever. Amen.

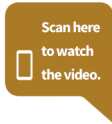
-St. Augustine Of Hippo



Sunday, Dec. 5th



BibleProject Video



Reflection for Sabbath

“Sabbath time can be a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork, mindless accumulation and the endless multiplication of desire, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity... Sabbath honors the necessary wisdom of dormancy...a time to remember to celebrate what is beautiful and sacred.” (Wayne Mueller)

Sabbath includes important elements that set it apart from a normal day off: **rest** (mind, body and spirit), **delight** (remembering what brings you joy), and **worship** (connecting deeply with God).

How will you rest today?

How will you delight today?

How will you worship?



Monday, Dec. 6th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

1 Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days. The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses. 2 Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy! The deserts will become as green as the mountains of Lebanon, as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon. There the Lord will display his glory, the splendor of our God. 3 With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands, and encourage those who have weak knees. 4 Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you." (Isaiah 35:1-4 NLT)

Devotional: Have you ever experienced a wilderness, a time that felt especially challenging either physically, spiritually, or emotionally? I suspect many of us have felt somewhat disoriented during the last 18 months. Personally, on top of Covid, I've struggled with two cancer diagnoses, intense treatment, and multiple surgeries. At times I have felt lonely, hopeless, and overwhelmed with fear.

In this passage, Isaiah prophesies about a different kind of experience of the wilderness – one where joy, healing and refreshing emerges. And this joy isn't because God just makes the wilderness disappear – He doesn't teleport his people out of the harsh elements back home. But He changes the way they experience the wilderness. It is in that same desert that God's glory is displayed (v2). They can have joy in the midst of hardship because a Savior is coming for them (v4). This, too, has been my experience – that in the midst of difficult trials, it is possible to experience joy through hope in Jesus.

In Isaiah 35:1-10, God promises to transform our wilderness experiences. The prophet describes a lush scene where flowers bloom and water gushes in a former wilderness. One where hot sands feel cool and refreshing, where vegetation grows and wild animals no longer prowl. Blind eyes are opened and lame legs healed. The deaf hear, the dumb speak. He makes a highway through the desert where His people walk with Him (v.8).

This Advent we remember the promise of our Savior. The One who comes and transforms our wilderness and walks us home. The One who changes our fear and despair into joyful expectation. He is our good news of great joy - He has made a way home for us.

Reflection: What areas of your life feel hopeless and barren? What would it look like to believe that Christ is coming for you and that He will redeem and transform those places?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Tuesday, Dec. 7th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

5 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God. 6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them — He remains faithful forever. 7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, 8 the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous. 9 The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. 10 The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 146:5-10)

Devotional: Joy is defined as a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. When was the last time you experienced that kind of joy? I can think of several instances recently, but one stood out. This summer my kids earned tickets to Elitch Gardens (an amusement park) through a local library reading program. As we spent the day there, one of the first rides they wanted to go on was the Mind Eraser roller coaster. I have not ridden this roller coaster since I was 12...and let's just say I'm not 12 anymore! As I've gotten older, my motion sickness has gotten worse, and I was already rocking my sea-bands for the day to help with that. So cool, right?! Anyway, I made the decision to go for it and I could not contain my joy as we were being hurled through the air at high speeds. I laughed throughout the entire ride--happiness was overflowing from me, even after my head stopped spinning.

The joy I experienced from riding the roller coaster that day was exhilarating, but fleeting. This passage in Psalms reminds us of the joy that we have in the Lord ALL THE TIME. Look at all the ways God brings us joy. How incredible is it that the God of all creation is our hope? The actual Maker of heaven and earth lifts us up! He is our help, He fights on our behalf, He heals, He provides. I don't know about you, but this makes my heart swell with joy. Life gives us plenty of opportunities to be anxious and frustrated and hopeless. But the Lord is inviting us to remember who He is, and to walk in His joy, which is everlasting.

Reflection: When was the last time you experienced joy with the Lord? Is it a regular occurrence or does it only happen sporadically? What are some ways He is inviting you to experience His joy regularly?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Wednesday, Dec. 8th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

Visio Divina: Center yourself by taking a deep breath and relaxing your body as best you can. Allow your shoulders to lower away from your ears. Let your arms rest in your lap and let your feet be fully supported by the floor. Feel the weight of your body held by the chair. Spend this time in quiet. Open yourself up to God's voice.

Brief pause.

Take a deep breath in and out. Continue breathing deeply as you read the image. In this moment, simply notice the visual qualities of what you see: colors, line, shape, form, space, and texture.

Brief pause.

Now, take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to? What parts of the image did you quickly brush by or overlook? Observe your own emotions. How does this image make you feel?

Brief pause.

Take a moment to imagine you are the one in the image watching the sun over the mountains. Notice what emotions surface when you think about God being in control. What do you feel when you hear that the One who makes the sun rise and set over the mountains is with you and is for you? That He rejoices in you? Do you feel anything holding you back from experiencing the joy of the Lord? Share that with God now.

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Wednesday, Dec. 8th



Thursday, Dec. 9th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

8 *And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.*

11 *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

13 *Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,*

14 *"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:8-14)*

Devotional: Why do you think God picked the shepherds to share and spread the good news? As a teacher, parent, and wife to a librarian, it's important to check resources around here. What makes a news source reliable for you?

For me, I look for someone who is generous and shows integrity, good at keeping things confidential, is non-judgemental, and accountable.

God didn't pick His key players for this story exactly like I would. Shepherds didn't have high position or status, rather they were in the lowest echelon of society. They probably didn't have an education. They also weren't prepared for the responsibility.

So, what did God see in these shepherds? Why did He pick them to deliver such an important announcement? I think it has less to do with how trustworthy or reliable they were and more to do with God's choice to identify with the world through these lowly shepherds. God chose to stand with the marginalized working the night shift, as a sign of solidarity with the socially outcast. In choosing them, His message of hope for the poor, blessing for the brokenhearted, strength for the tired, liberation for the oppressed are fulfilled even in the messengers themselves. So let's stop and take a minute to ponder, like Mary, the significance of how Jesus, through His birth and announcement, finds solidarity with the marginalized world and places them as the key players in His story of good news.

Reflection: How is God asking you to find solidarity with the marginalized this Advent?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Friday, Dec. 10th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.

8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:3-8)

Devotional: What are you grateful for? This is not an idle question – it's incredibly important.

Have you ever noticed how many of Paul's letters begin with gratitude? For Paul, he knows that his joy begins with being grateful. In this case, Paul is grateful for a memory that brought him joy.

Have you ever had a memory come to your mind that filled you with that kind of joy? Almost as if God deposited that memory there just for you. Or have you had a memory that caused every other important thing in your life to all of a sudden seem less important? Every once in a while, a memory will float across my mind that will cause me to pause and reflect on the joy of God's love and promise in my life.

One particular memory I have is of my daughter around age two. I remember her waddling toward the front door as I'm about to leave, her arms stretched high as she said, "Daddy, I love you." It was the first full sentence I could remember coming from my little girl. I can remember the way it felt, like every part of my innermost being melted inside. I'm grateful for this memory as it brings me so much joy.

The BibleProject video for this week describes joy in the Christian faith as an "attitude God's people adopt not because of happy circumstances, but because of their hope in God's love and promise." In this season of Advent, find some time to sit and reflect on a memory, one that fills you with such incredible joy that you cannot help but be grateful for God's love and promise.

Reflection: What are you grateful for this Advent season? Is there a memory that brings you great joy? Can you take some time in your day to reflect on the joy of those memories?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Saturday, Dec. 11th



Christmas Carol Devotional

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem

Come and behold Him

Born the King of Angels

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

Christ the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light

Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb

Very God

Begotten, not created

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation

Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God

All glory in the highest

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning

Jesus, to Thee be glory given

Word of the Father

Now in flesh appearing

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

Christ the Lord!



Saturday, Dec. 11th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

The roots of this beloved Christmas song go back 277 years to a man named John F. Wade, who was both the writer and composer. Wade was born in Belgium in 1711 but escaped to France after the Jacobite Rising in 1745. He lived with a group of exiled English Catholics and made his living working on church music and teaching music. Some historians would say that Wade was inspired by the ancient Latin hymn “Adeste Fideles” (which means “be present and near, ye faithful”) written by an Order of Cistercian monks in the early 13th century. In 1853, the Reverend Frederick Oakeley, who was appointed to be a priest at Westminster Cathedral a year earlier, took the song that Wade wrote, translated it into English and created the modern day version that we sing to this day.

Fun fact: O Come, All Ye Faithful has been sung over the years by some of the world's greatest singers and musicians like Andrea Bocelli, Bing Crosby, and Nat King Cole. It was reported to be the favorite Christmas carol of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. And who can forget the 1988 TV movie “The Very Brady Christmas” where a building collapses on Mike Brady and Carole sings this Christmas song with the onlookers until Mike miraculously climbs out of the rubble! Oh, the monks of the 13th century wouldn't know what to do with Hollywood!

One of the vivid parts of this song is the third verse in which angels from heaven gather and burst into song, making a visual appearance here on this earth. Sleepy shepherds see them rejoicing over the birth of Christ (Luke 2) and while terrified at what is happening in the sky, run to go see what has just taken place in the humble town of Bethlehem.

Reflection: Have you ever considered that when you worship, you are joining with the angels of heaven to sing to the King?! Revelation 4 paints a vivid picture of continual worship, day and night, before the throne. What does this make you think and feel?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Week 3

- Peace -

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.*

-St. Francis of Assisi



Sunday, Dec. 12th



BibleProject Video



Reflection for Sabbath

“Sabbath time can be a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork, mindless accumulation and the endless multiplication of desire, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity... Sabbath honors the necessary wisdom of dormancy...a time to remember to celebrate what is beautiful and sacred.” (Wayne Mueller)

Sabbath includes important elements that set it apart from a normal day off: **rest** (mind, body and spirit), **delight** (remembering what brings you joy), and **worship** (connecting deeply with God).

How will you rest today?

How will you delight today?

How will you worship?



Monday, Dec. 13th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Devotional: Over the last 18 months, in addition to navigating all things COVID, our family navigated a major life transition. God called us to leave the community we had called home for nine years and join the another church team. I'm so grateful the Lord brought us here! But, letting go of the familiar and comfortable was extremely disorienting. If I am honest, there were many days in the process where I was anxious about the future. Worry and doubt plagued me more than I would like to admit.

These verses in Philippians are some of my favorites, because they remind us that no matter the situation, we have a God who wants to fill us with peace. Not the kind of peace you might find in a self-help book or inspirational talk, but the kind of internal transformation that sows peace into the very depth of our being. Letting go of stress and anxiousness isn't about a change in our circumstances (although sometimes that happens), but rather it's a transformation of our hearts and minds. It's allowing God to deposit something into us that we can't do for ourselves.

Philippians 4:6 says that when we ask God to carry our burdens, He will guard our hearts and minds from the fear and worry that so easily fills us.

There is a saying: we become what we give our attention to. I wonder what it would do in our lives if instead of giving our attention to all the stresses of the world (of which there are many), we were instead to give our attention to prayer and thanksgiving, allowing God to give us His peace. This Christmas season, let's intentionally practice bringing our cares to Jesus, turning our attention to Him, and allow Him to fill us with his peace.

Reflection: Do you have a circumstance or situation that is causing you to be anxious? In prayer, imagine putting that worry into a box and then giving that box to Jesus, allowing Him to take it and fill you with His peace.

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Tuesday, Dec. 14th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.” 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 4 In that day you will say: “Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.” (Isaiah 12:2-6)

Devotional: I have said many times, “I trust you, God.” But when I examine my heart, do I really trust God? Sometimes. But often I get lost in my head and try to do things on my own first.

Over the past year, background anxiety started to get very loud in my head. I have felt myself living a life of fear-based decisions or a lack of trust. Ironically, my word for the year was “fearless”. Well, talk about a huge wake up call when I got out of my head and remembered that! One day I was washing dishes while mulling over a big decision we had to make. I could feel my heart start to race, and I started to panic. But I sensed the Lord say, “Trust in me. I am with you. You will be okay.” I fell into tears in a miraculous sense of peace.

God has a way of giving us a sense of peace that we cannot explain. It’s like those thoughts that try rob us of joy, go silent. The gift of being able to trust in Him is a lifeline when we are going through seasons of anxiety. Do I still fall into fear? Yes. But God meets me and reminds me to trust in Him. I wonder if any of you are experiencing anxiety or fears. It’s okay to feel these emotions.

My prayer for us this season is that we find peace in knowing we have a God we can trust. I pray we have sweet reminders of how much He loves us and that He bears our fears and anxieties.

Reflection: Take a moment and imagine what it would look like if your immediate response was trusting God. What freedoms would you experience living life fearlessly with your eyes focused on God?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Wednesday, Dec. 15th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

Visio Divina: Center yourself by taking a deep breath and relaxing your body as best you can. Allow your shoulders to lower away from your ears. Let your arms rest in your lap and let your feet be fully supported by the floor. Feel the weight of your body held by the chair. Spend this time in quiet. Open yourself up to God's voice.

Brief pause.

Take a deep breath in and out. Continue breathing deeply as you read the image. In this moment, simply notice the visual qualities of what you see: colors, line, shape, form, space, and texture.

Brief pause.

Now, take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to? What parts of the image did you quickly brush by or overlook? Observe your own emotions. How does this image make you feel?

Brief pause.

And now, use your imagination. How do you picture the shalom of God? Is it like this image? Is it the peaceful streams of Psalm 23? Does another image come to mind? In this last year, how have you experienced Jesus as the Prince of Peace? In what ways have you sensed Jesus speaking healing over your life...soothing your anxiety, soothing your inner turmoil... speaking peace over your stress? Now ask the Holy Spirit to pour out His peace where you feel anxious.

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Wednesday, Dec. 15th



Thursday, Dec. 16th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15 The Lord has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more. 16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. 17 "The Lord your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. (Zephaniah 3:14-17 NASB)

Devotional: How do you navigate divine silence?

Not too long ago, we were in a significant season of discernment. We were doing all the things "you're supposed to do" to hear from the Lord – praying, fasting, seeking counsel from family, friends, and spiritual directors. We were hearing from lots of people. But it was God's silence that felt most unnerving.

Truth be told, divine silence can make me feel uncomfortable. I struggle with it. I make lots of meaning in the quiet. Often I don't have peace. In those moments of silence everything can feel heightened – emotions feel thin and unnerving questions bubble up.

Where is God? Why isn't He speaking? What's wrong with me? God's quiet can be disorienting.

Yet, it was right in the middle of this quiet that I bumped into God as I read this translation of Zephaniah 3:17 – "He will be quiet in His love..." Frankly, sometimes I'd prefer something more like this: "He will [tell me exactly what to do] in His love" But God's love is different.

Have you ever been around a couple who has been married for decades? Sometimes they can just sit in the quiet of each other's presence and communicate deep love. Sometimes, love is communicated most deeply in the silence. I wonder if this is what Zephaniah is getting at here? Have you ever considered God's silence in that way? Rather than being a place of unease, what if God's silence is simply a signpost of His love, trust, and deep pleasure in you? How might that bring you peace?

Reflection: How do you experience God's silence? When was the last time you just sat quietly in God's presence and experienced His love? Take some time to do that today.

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Friday, Dec. 17th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

“John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” (Luke 3:7-8)

“What should we do then?” the crowd asked. John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?” “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.” (Luke 3:10-14)

Devotional: “You brood of vipers!” John shouted as the crowds approached to be baptized. Not exactly what I would call welcoming. But pay attention to what John says next: “produce fruit in keeping with repentance”. He goes on to tell them to give to the poor and not be greedy.

John recognized that people were coming to be baptized as a formality, an external act that didn’t reflect an internal reality. His challenge? Surrender all of who you are to God—every thought and action—so you might be transformed from the inside out, which is demonstrated by how you live your everyday life.

How does this lead to peace? Simply this: the more you are emptied through surrender to God, the more the person of Jesus can fill you with Himself, with peace.

The truth is, I often get angry. It’s really hard to be filled with the peace of God when you’re filled with anger. The year I turned 40, not much was going according to my plan in any area of my life and I was really angry. Slowly, over months, God revealed that my anger was a warning sign of something deeper: my unwillingness to surrender. Though I went through the motions, like John’s crowd, God wanted to transform me from the inside out as I surrendered hurt, expectations, pride, and more. Miraculously, as I slowly did this, the anger melted away, and I began to be filled with the peace of Jesus once again.

I believe we never outgrow the need to continually surrender our whole selves to God so that we might be filled fully with the peace that is Jesus. This Advent season, let’s embrace this deep work of surrender so that we can be filled with Jesus, filled with peace.

Reflection: What are internal warning signs that you need to surrender something or someone to God (anger, anxiety, hopelessness)? What is Jesus inviting you to surrender today so He might fill you with himself, with peace?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Saturday, Dec. 18th



Christmas Carol Devotional

“Little Drummer Boy”

Come they told me - Pa rum pum pum-pum
A newborn King to see - Pa rum pum pum-pum
Our finest gifts we bring - Pa rum pum pum-pum
To lay before the king - Pa rum pum pum-pum
 Rum pum pum-pum
 Rum pum pum-pum
So to honor Him - Pa rum pum pum-pum
 When we come

Little baby - Pa rum pum pum-pum
I am a poor boy too - Pa rum pum pum-pum
I have no gift to bring - Pa rum pum pum-pum
That's fit to give our King - Pa rum pum pum-pum
 Rum pum pum-pum
 Rum pum pum-pum
Shall I play for you - Pa rum pum pum-pum
 On my drum

Mary nodded - Pa rum pum pum-pum
The ox and lamb kept time - Pa rum pum pum-pum
I played my drum for Him - Pa rum pum pum-pum
I played my best for Him - Pa rum pum pum-pum
 Rum pum pum-pum
 Rum pum pum-pum
Then He smiled at me - Pa rum pum pum-pum
 Me and my drum



Saturday, Dec. 18th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

Does anyone else like a good nap? In 1941, Katherine K. Davis says that, while laying down one afternoon, she had a melody flood her mind. The lyrics quickly followed and this talented musician, who was trained at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, soon put together this popular Christmas carol about a poor young boy that marched before baby Jesus, while playing his drum as a gift to the King. The song was originally known as the “Carol of the Drum” and the story goes that Katherine didn’t even know the song was renamed “Little Drummer Boy” until years later. Her friend called her and told her that the local radio stations were playing her song under a different name and crediting other people.

Confused about how her song was stolen, she called the radio stations and insisted it was her song, eventually taking legal action. However, to this day, many people take credit for helping her. In 1951, the famous Von Trapp family singers from Austria (of Sound of Music fame!) recorded this Christmas carol for the first time and brought it to more prominence.

This song is similar to a story in the Gospels of a little boy who gives his meal of 5 loaves and 2 fishes to Jesus. It was all he had to offer and Jesus received his meager gift. Imagine the kindness of Jesus as he looked at this little one giving up his lunch! In a parallel story, the Little Drummer Boy is so poor that he doesn’t have anything to give but the taps on his drum. But even this little baby recognizes the gift and one of the last lines in the song says “then He smiled at me.”

Reflection: Spend a few minutes imagining what it is like when Jesus receives your gifts of worship, your sacrifices, or time. Put away any self criticism that it is not enough. Let Him “smile at you!”

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Week 4

- Love -

*O Lord, who has mercy upon all,
take away from me my sins,
and mercifully kindle in me
the fire of Your Holy Spirit.*

*Take away from me the heart of stone,
and give me a heart of flesh,
a heart to love and adore You,
a heart to delight in You,
to follow and to enjoy You,
for Christ's sake.*

-St. Ambrose of Milan



Sunday, Dec. 19th



BibleProject Video



Reflection for Sabbath

“Sabbath time can be a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork, mindless accumulation and the endless multiplication of desire, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity... Sabbath honors the necessary wisdom of dormancy...a time to remember to celebrate what is beautiful and sacred.” (Wayne Mueller)

Sabbath includes important elements that set it apart from a normal day off: **rest** (mind, body and spirit), **delight** (remembering what brings you joy), and **worship** (connecting deeply with God).

How will you rest today?

How will you delight today?

How will you worship?



Monday, Dec. 20th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

4 How long, Lord God Almighty, will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people? 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful. 6 You have made us an object of derision to our neighbors, and our enemies mock us. 7 Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. (Psalm 80:4-7)

Devotional: Have you ever been desperate for God to show up? Maybe you have struggled with depression, or a financial hardship, or grieved the loss of a loved one, and you need God to come and do something. This is where the Israelites find themselves in Psalm 80. They are desperate, tired, and overwhelmed. They are in so much distress it's like eating and drinking bowlfuls of tears (8:5).

So, they beg God to save them. Psalm 8:7 says, "Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved". They know they need God to do something about their desperate situation. Maybe you've been there too.

A few years ago, our family was in Florida to celebrate our grandmother's 90th birthday.

While there, we had a chance to hang out at the pool with family. At the time, our youngest was 4 years old and couldn't swim. We told him to wait for his floaty, but while we were getting things situated, he jumped in without it. I turned around and saw two little arms frantically trying to bring his head above the surface, and my heart stopped. It was a desperate situation, one he couldn't get himself out of. He needed someone to jump in and save him.

Sometimes we find ourselves like a little kid who can't swim in the pool of life. We are desperate and can't do anything except ask God to jump in and save us. We need a rescuer.

And here is the good news - this is what we celebrate at Advent. God has come to rescue us! He isn't indifferent; instead, He steps right into the mess of our world and our lives to be with us. That's why Jesus' birth is such good news. God has come and it changes everything!

Reflection: Is there a place in your life where you are desperate for God to show up? Spend some time inviting God into that space and thanking Him that He wants to be with you.

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Tuesday, Dec. 21st



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:7-10, Message Version)

Devotional: Oh. My. Goodness. Am I crying in class again?! I was 18, a baby Christian who had just started following Jesus the month before I left for college. I was in my usual get-up for class-- an oversized, men's hoodie pulled up over my face, sitting as close to the door as possible. We were reading Plato and he described the human soul's ability to glimpse universal beauty through beholding creation or gazing into the face of her beloved. I knew in my knower that Plato's philosophy was pointing at something powerful, something deeply true. These thoughts gave my budding faith words for how I was experiencing Jesus, and the tears came.

At the same time, as I was beginning to read the Bible, I remember gravitating towards the Gospel of John and his letters. These words had similar echoes, calling me to reflect on universal love. John's words drew my heart in so much deeper because it spoke to my true identity: a person "who loves God is born of God!" But here came the break with Plato--to recognize and glimpse God's love through human love or beholding creation is not the end in itself.

To glimpse God's beauty pulls us into receiving revelation that Jesus loves us first! This is a rushing, sacrificing, and healing Love that searches for us. God is not simply waiting to be found. Jesus finds us. Jesus, in his love for us, decides that we are beautifully and wonderfully made. We reflect that love back to Jesus most perfectly when we demonstrate sacrificial love to one another. When we move towards the damage of people's lives and reflect Jesus' love, we can speak freedom so that people can fall into God's perfect love.

Reflection: Ask Jesus to show you how He sees you through the eyes of love. Pray for the Holy Spirit to heal where you feel broken or damaged today. Then, ask Jesus: Who do you want me to move towards today, to demonstrate your love?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Wednesday, Dec. 22nd



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

Visio Divina: Center yourself by taking a deep breath and relaxing your body as best you can. Allow your shoulders to lower away from your ears. Let your arms rest in your lap and let your feet be fully supported by the floor. Feel the weight of your body held by the chair. Spend this time in quiet. Open yourself up to God's voice.

Brief pause.

Take a deep breath in and out. Continue breathing deeply as you read the image. In this moment, simply notice the visual qualities of what you see: colors, line, shape, form, space, and texture.

Brief pause.

Now, take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to? What parts of the image did you quickly brush by or overlook? Observe your own emotions. How does this image make you feel?

Brief pause.

Imagine yourself in this piece. What would you be thinking if you are the **Disciple** watching as Jesus humbles himself before you as he washes your feet? As you look at the one who is suppose to be the savior of the world presenting as a servant doing the dirty work? What can you imagine needing from God in that moment?

Imagine you are **Jesus** as you bend down and take the dirty, grimy feet of those who follow you and you begin to clean them. You are the Messiah and still you choose to love by serving and becoming low in the eyes of society. What do you think and feel about these disciples in this moment? How does this change the way you see them? How does this change the way you see yourself? How does this change the way you see the Father?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Wednesday, Dec. 22nd



Thursday, Dec. 23rd



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Devotional: “Love is not just tolerance. It's not just distant appreciation. It's a warm sense of, 'I am enjoying the fact that you are you.'” – N.T. Wright

Recently, I was snuggling with my 5-year old while she fell asleep and, with her eyes barely open, she looked at me and said “I love looking at you, Mom, and I love being with you.” A few minutes later she fell asleep next to me and I laid there reflecting on the sweet simplicity of her words. My little one reminded me that in a culture that offers various definitions of love, we know that one part of love is to enjoy each other.

I don't know about you, but I grew up thinking that Jesus' primary aim was to refine me. In a culture that praises behavior modification, it is easy to project this idea onto God. God is interested in our sanctification, but when we look to Jesus, we see a God who accomplishes this by being with us.

No other religion speaks of a God that came down to BE with his creation. Not one. Christmas reminds us that God came down to BE with us in the person of Jesus.

When Jesus came, He didn't distance Himself and hang out only in the temple where people could come and hear Him teach from a distance. Rather, when Jesus came, He lived among the people He desperately loved. He enjoyed His friendships. He partied with His buddies. He loved and continues to love being with the people He created.

Reflection: When was the last time you sensed God enjoying you? Do you doubt God's delight in being with you? What would happen if you sat for a minute and asked God to sit with you and to show you the depth of His delight in you?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Friday, Dec. 24th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Devotional: Imagine Christmas Eve all those years ago and how, in just a few short hours, the world would be forever changed. I imagine Mary was exhausted after her long and arduous journey to Bethlehem. Exhausted and in pain, having carried this baby for nine months. I wonder if contractions and active labor even began on Christmas Eve as her body prepared to deliver a miracle. This soon-to-be-born miracle was God in the flesh. Over my years of following Jesus, I have felt powerful experiences of God’s love. Many times, however, I don’t particularly “feel” His love. Do you know what I mean? My prayers, my reading of Scripture, my worship can sometimes feel sort of flat. In these moments, we imagine God is distant, doesn’t care, or we have somehow driven Him away because of our sinfulness. Most of us feel this at one time or another.

Author Rich Villodas offers a helpful thought when we experience this lack of feeling: “In this uneventful moment, God purifies us of the false god of good feelings.” Wow. Sit with that thought for a moment.

What can we do when we don’t particularly “feel” the love of God? One of the often-spoken commands in Scripture is to remember. When you do not feel particularly loved by someone dear to you, you remember their past actions and words, right? And it grounds you. In the same way, we remember the most wonderful act of God in sending His Son into the world as a tangible act of love.

This Christmas, let us remember the God who loves us, no matter how we may feel at this moment. Let us remember the God who demonstrated His love for us by drawing near to us through His Son, Jesus. Let us remember the God who made His dwelling among us.

Reflection: When you don’t particularly “feel” the love of God, how do you normally respond? In addition to the birth of Jesus as a demonstration of God’s love for you, recall a time in your life when God’s love was made known to you in a very real way. Hold onto that memory for a moment, and give thanks.

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer



Saturday, Dec. 25th



Christmas Carol Devotional

“What Child is This?”

What child is this who laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping
This, this is Christ the king
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste, haste to bring him laud
The babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding
The end of fear for all who hear
The silent Word is speaking
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh
Come peasant king to love him;
The king of kings salvation brings
Let loving hearts enthrone him
This, this is Christ the king
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing
Haste, haste to bring him praise
The babe, the son of Mary.

Raise, raise the song on high
The virgin sings her lullaby:
Joy, joy for christ is born
The babe, the son of Mary.



Saturday, Dec. 25th



2 Minutes Of Silence & Stillness Before God

William Chatterton Dix was working as an insurance salesman in Glasgow, Scotland when his world was shattered by a near fatal illness. Only 29, he spent several months confined to his bed and sunk into a severe depression. It was during this period that he grew desperate for God, and his spiritual hunger grew through reading the scriptures for hours. Dix was a gifted songwriter and, during this dark period, he produced many longstanding hymns, including the well-known “What Child is This?” (also known as “The Manger Song”). In 1871 this song was set to the popular English folk song “Greensleeves” and adopted a haunting melody. His writing style was described as being “imaginative, reverent, and simple, yet borderline sentimental.” His songwriting has stood the test of time.

The song has an interesting format with a question and answer for the first 2 verses and an invitation to worship for the 3rd and last verse.

Verse 1: Question: “What child is this?” Answer: “This is Christ the King”

Verse 2: Question: “Why lies he in such mean estate?” Answer: A reminder Jesus will be treated poorly and killed on this earth.

Verse 3: It’s a call to salvation. This song invites us to worship with body, soul and mind!

Reflection: The story of William Dix confined to his bed in a horrible tragedy, yet finding God in his depression, is really interesting. He drew near to God instead of blaming God. He stayed open to God, instead of growing hard. He studied the Scriptures, instead of giving up his spiritual practices. What resulted was a deep understanding of God and his story that has influenced millions of people in the form of a song that is rich in theology and beautiful in imagery. What period of time has God used in your life that has taken despair and depression and created a deep place of understanding who God is?

2 Minutes Of Silence & Prayer

