



Calvary
Baptist Church

For the week of:
12/23/24

Family Worship Guide

Waiting for the Messiah
“The Payment”

The birth of Christ is significant because of His death. He was born to die. God had always determined that Christ would come to be the payment for the sins of man. From the manger, we view the cross.

**Merry Christmas,
Kent and Novella Rathjen**

WELCOME

Why should we do a family devotional?

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” - Deuteronomy 6:4-8

As long as there have been a “people of God,” the command given to them has always been that they would be instructing their children in the way of the Lord. It is expected that parents will be teaching their children.

But teaching children is more than simply giving rules. It involves showing them HOW to obey the Lord by doing it yourself! These family devotionals are meant to equip you as an individual to grow in your understanding of the Lord and His Word, as well as providing parents with the resources and opportunities to demonstrate for their children what it looks like to pursue God.

How to use this devotional:

This is simply a resource for you to use however works best for your family! Each day there is a selected Scripture reading, devotional, discussion questions, a prayer prompt, and a song to sing together. You may consider splitting parts and having one family member read the Scripture while another reads the devotional and another leads the prayer. Feel free to read additional Scripture as you call to mind passages that relate to what was read. Sing more sing with your family than the one provided if you feel led to. Use this guide in whatever way helps you and your family draw nearer to the Lord together.

UNDERSTANDING ADVENT

In 2 Peter 1:12, we read, “Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them...” In large part, that is what pastors do – they remind you of what you already know. We need this because in the business of life we all get distracted and forget (or at least lose focus of) the things that are important. That being the case, in this introduction I hope to remind you of a few of the essentials about Advent.

Advent is not a word most of us use 325 or so days of the year. What does the word actually mean? If you look in your Websters (at least in mine) you’ll find two entries: advent – a coming or arrival of any important event or person; and Advent – 1. The birth of Christ. 2. The second coming of Christ. 3. The season including the four Sundays before Christmas. From this we can deduce that the season of Advent that we are entering is focused on “the birth of Christ.”

When thinking of “the birth of Christ,” I prefer to use the term “incarnation,” literally, the putting on of meat or flesh. Using this term reminds me that Christ (Messiah – anointed one) existed before “the birth of Christ.” God the Son has always existed. Before the incarnation He existed as spirit and was with the Father and the Holy Spirit from eternity past. And although He was omnipresent, we can look on the incarnation as a time when He left His honored position in the pristine “third Heaven” and entered the foul, sin-soaked sewer of Earth to become one of us. He did this:

- so that by His own nature He could teach us about the Father,
- so that He could teach us how to live a life that would please the Father,
- so that He could live a perfect life (something that we could never do) and by so doing earn the righteousness that we need to stand in the presence of the Father, and then
- so that He could voluntarily die a death of agony beyond anything we can comprehend, suffering the wrath of the Father as He paid all the sin debt of all of God’s elect, and thereby making forgiveness from the infinitely just Father possible for us.

But perhaps the most important thing to understand is that He did all of this because of His love for us; and as He has loved us, so we are to love one another.

I have written nothing you didn’t already know, but my prayer is that by reminding you of these things, you can and will enter the Advent season with a deep gratitude to God and a deep love for one another that will draw others to the Jesus we love.

**Merry Christmas,
Pastor Greg Teague**

MONDAY

Read Isaiah 45:9

Discuss

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

God did a wonderful thing when He gave us minds. We can reason, think, remember, and come to conclusions. God wanted us to come to the conclusion that He is the Creator and worthy to be praised! He wanted us to be friends with Him and talk about all kinds of things--like this world He made for us. It truly is a work to inspire awe and wonder. When you look at stars marching across the skies in a choreographed pattern, or see crazy weird sea creatures at an aquarium, it gives you a small appreciation for the conversations we could be having with the Master Mind behind it all.

But a mind can also imagine itself to be so wonderful that it can call into question decisions that the Creator already made, or hard things that happen. When things don't make sense to us, it's difficult to be friends with God.

Discussion Questions

- Can I disagree with God?
- What is arguing?
- Why is destruction certain for those who argue with God?
- What is at the center of challenging God's decisions?

Sing

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
Charles Wesley

Pray

God, open my eyes to who you are!

COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS

Verse 1:

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Verse 2:

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.



TUESDAY

Read Ecclesiastes 8:8

Discuss

“There is no man who has power to restrain the wind with the wind, and there is none who has power over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and wickedness will not provide escape to its masters.”

None of us can hold back our spirit from departing. None of us has the power to prevent the day of our death. There is no escaping that obligation, that dark battle. And in the face of death, wickedness will certainly not rescue those who practice it.

Solomon wrote that verse in the Old Testament. He didn't know Jesus, but he knew the day was coming when a Messiah would deliver us. Solomon knew men were not perfect, and that they deserved to die. He understood that we can't tell God we disagree with the way this works and make it change. There is no escaping the day of that “dark battle.” This is when we learn the consequences of arguing with God and living according to what we want rather than accepting God's ways.

When this marvelous mind God gave us chooses poorly, we find ourselves face to face with wickedness. It wasn't God's design for that to happen, but He did give us the freedom to think and choose. Sadly, we learn that wickedness is not a good friend. It has taken us far from all the good things God wanted to give us. In fact, if something doesn't prevent it, we will face the kind of death that will permanently separate us from our perfect God.

Discussion Questions

- Solomon said that wickedness will not rescue those who practice it. What does this mean?
- Why do our earthly bodies die?
- What do you say to a person who says, “I don't think I'm ‘wicked.’ I try my best. Do I deserve to die?”

Sing

Oh Little Town of Bethlehem
Philip Brooks

Pray

God, please help me to see clearly your righteousness and my own human nature.

OH LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Verse 1:

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.

Verse 2:

For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth.

Verse 3:

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in.

Verse 4:

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!



WEDNESDAY

Read Isaiah 45:18

Discuss

“For thus says Yahweh, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it; He established it and did not create it a formless place, but formed it to be inhabited), “I am Yahweh, and there is none else.”

“I am the Lord,” he says, “and there is no other. I publicly proclaim bold promises. I do not whisper obscurities in some dark corner so no one can understand what I mean. And I did not tell the people of Israel to ask me for something I did not plan to give. I, the Lord, speak only what is true and right.”

God knew if he gave us choices, we’d step outside His plan. We messed it up so badly, that we literally have ourselves in a life and death situation. God knows us well, and He knew He would need to have a plan for when we didn’t use our minds wisely. He never intended to leave us to death’s mercy.

In the Old Testament, God used Isaiah to tell the people that God would publicly declare His promises so that no one would be confused as to what was expected of them. The people knew that they needed redemption, so they offered sacrifices so that God would forgive them. They knew they had chosen friendship with wickedness. Isaiah told them that God had a long-range plan in a Messiah. They’d have to wait, though. Meanwhile, He gave them promises that required faith.

Discussion Questions

- God said He speaks only what is true and right. Are you ready to hear that—even if it’s different from what you think?
- Why is it hard to give up our own opinions of what is true and right?
- How do we find out what God wants?

Sing

O Holy Night
Adolphe Adam

Pray

Lord, help me to appreciate how much you love me, and to trust that your promises are for my good.

O HOLY NIGHT

Verse 1:

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope- the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Verse 2:

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here came the Wise Men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our Friend.
He knows our need— to our weakness is no stranger.
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!

Verse 3:

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!



THURSDAY

Read Psalm 66:18-19

Discuss

“If I see wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer.”

If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, my Lord would not have listened. But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer.

People who lived before Jesus came to earth knew they were sinful. They didn't fully understand the mission of the Messiah, but they knew God. They knew His mercy and love. So, they confessed their sinfulness to God and felt His presence. God listened. This Psalmist knew he could gain the ear of God by confessing that he made poor choices. He didn't argue with God or excuse his actions.

A miracle happened when the Psalmist confessed his sins! God paid attention to his prayer! He regained a relationship with his Creator. One day--when Jesus completed his mission on earth--people would fully know how to regain that relationship. Jesus would hand them victory over death. People understood death, but now they could understand Life!

Discussion Questions

- Why did the Psalmist say, “If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, God would not have listened”?
- What transpires when one confesses sin that changes things with God?
- Do you feel God listens to your prayer?
- If not, how can you “open God's ears”?

Sing

Hark The Herald Angels Sing
Charles Wesley

Pray

Lord, please help me understand my sins, and to confess them with a truly contrite heart.

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Verse 1:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

Verse 2:

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel. [Refrain]

Verse 3:

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]



FRIDAY

Read Romans 4:24b-25

Discuss

“but for our sake also, to whom it will be counted, as those who believe upon Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered over on account of our transgressions, and was raised on account of our justification.”

...God will also declare us to be righteous if we believe in God, who brought Jesus our Lord back from the dead. He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised from the dead to make us right with God.

Being punished for someone else’s mistakes isn’t fair. Everyone has a story about being blamed for someone else’s mistakes. However, if someone you love is going to experience something unpleasant because of their actions, you may wish to spare them and take the blame—but only if the punishment is within the perimeters of “bear-ability.” That is, so long as there isn’t too much pain, humiliation, or inconvenience. But imagine taking a death sentence for someone. That’s what Jesus did for us. It wasn’t fair, but He did it.

He died, but He also rose from the dead! And then he declared us righteous if we believe God did that for us. Let’s go full circle from arguing with God, understanding that we’re sinful and deserve to die, to praying to God’s listening ear and confessing our sins. Where does that leave us? Right where God wanted us all along! God spoke through Isaiah (44:22), “I have swept away your sins like the morning mists. I have scattered your offenses like the clouds. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free.”

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever been punished for someone else’s sin?
- How did that make you feel?
- How does it make you feel that Jesus took your punishment?
- How will this affect your future?

Sing

*How Deep The Father’s
Love for Us*
Stuart Townend

Pray

Thank God for giving the
greatest gift that could
ever be given.

HOW DEEP THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR US

Verse 1:

How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss –
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.

Verse 2:

Behold the man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life –
I know that it is finished.

Verse 3:

I will not boast in anything,
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer;
But this I know with all my heart –
His wounds have paid my ransom.



WEEKEND

Each week we will be walking through a section of Scripture focused on the advent of our Lord. Two Gospels, Matthew and Luke, record these stories for us. There won't be any devotional these days, just Scripture reading.

This week we will read Luke 2:1-20. Christmas has come, and with it the birth of Jesus!

The birth of Jesus is a beautiful miracle. As we read this account, let us take time to marvel in the great gift of God, that He would save sinners by sending His own Son. The baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger is Christ the Lord. The baby so tender and mild is the same one who will die on the cross for us.

Isn't that a marvelous thing?

LUKE 2:1-20

Now it happened that in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus for a census to be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was going to be registered for the census, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was betrothed to him, and was with child. Now it happened that while they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guest room. In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people. For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. "And this will be the sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." And it happened that when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." So they went in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it marveled at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary was treasuring all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as was told them.

MARANATHA



OUR LORD HAS COME