



Wisdom and Revelation

Today is the beginning of Advent. Advent means "arrival" and points to the start of an event or the arrival of a person. In churches and Christian communities around the world, "Advent" is used to refer to the four-weeks before Christmas used to remember and celebrate the arrival of Jesus.

This week focuses on WISDOM, and how Jesus is God's wisdom given to us. As you begin to count down the days until Christmas, many are joining to pray together with you that we might grow to know God better and enjoy all He has in store for us in our church and homes this year.

Each day is designed for an introductory note, followed by a Scripture passage, prayer, and a supplementary video.

Welcome to CHRISTMAS PRAYERS and Christmas 2022!

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Ephesians 1:17

Today's Prayer

Lord, I pray that I might know more about how knowing Jesus is the key to wisdom. Please reveal that to me this week.

Video

The Perfect Wisdom of Our God by Keith and Kristyn Getty

<https://youtu.be/hSnzYnOe6kI>



Wisdom and Seeking

Consider how your friends and neighbours are seeking for some light and answers in their lives. Like you, and your family, they need to know wisdom that can only be found in the Wonderful Counselor.

*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.*

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.*

And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

*He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.*

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9: 2, 6,7

Today's Prayer

Lord, help me to seek the wisdom that comes in knowing the counsel of Jesus...the Wonderful Counselor. And help me to point others around me to Jesus as well.

Video

Wonderful by CAIN on the set of The Chosen

<https://youtu.be/9CZHqmO5EMY>



Wisdom and Faithful Waiting

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

There is a lot of waiting in the Christmas season. Do you remember waiting when you were a child? Imagine spending a lifetime waiting for the arrival of Jesus and then being told you would not die until that day arrived. Would you have the patience of Simeon and Anna?

Something or someone I need to have I have trouble waiting on? _____

If you need a suggestion, watch today's video.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's

Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to

God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 2: 25-28

Today's Prayer

Lord, help me to wait with faith and patience this Christmas.

Video

Waiting on a Woman by Brad Paisley

<https://youtu.be/M-C-IbkuNWs>



Wisdom and Waiting AGAIN!

Zechariah was a man who was used to waiting. We know that priests only were chosen once to enter the temple and burn incense, so as an old man he had been waiting his whole career for this opportunity. We also know he was faithfully waiting for Messiah. His moment of doubt in the face of Gabriel's pronouncement is not surprising. It might have been more surprising if he had not experienced much doubt over the years – will I ever have a child, will I ever be called to serve in the temple before I die, will Messiah really come... We all doubt, and anyone who says they don't is lying. Wisdom is facing your doubts and continuing to look for God through them.

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

Luke 1: 5-25

Today's Prayer

Lord, I ask today that you help me wait on you even though I many have some doubts and fears.

Video

Waiting for Christmas to Come by Johnny Reid

<https://youtu.be/wT9mJTYq-P8>



Wisdom and Longing

The background of Emmanuel is a prophecy from Isaiah 7 written hundreds of years before Jesus' birth. Matthew 1:23 tells us how this was fulfilled in Jesus:

“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Today, it is time to start singing if you haven't begun already. Click on the video and sing O Come, O Come Emmanuel. The first video is the Piano Guys and you will have to do all the vocals. The second video allows you to sing along with Chris Tomlin.

*"O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save, And give them victory o'er the grave.*

*O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing night;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.*

*O come, Thou Key of David, come And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery.*

*O come, Adonai, Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law In cloud and majesty and awe.*

Today's Prayer

O Emmanuel, come into my heart, my life, and my home. You are welcome here.

Video

Piano Guys

<https://youtu.be/iO7ySn-Swwc>

Chris Tomlin

<https://youtu.be/UH7asSGxAxA>



Wisdom and Obedience

One way we can demonstrate our wisdom is by our obedience to God. If ever there was someone who would've questioned God's wisdom, it was Joseph. His wife-to-be was pregnant and he intended to quietly allow her to save some face (and perhaps her life) and let her slip away into the life of a shamed women who had a child outside of wedlock. God had a plan, but it required Joseph's obedience. After God appeared to Joseph in a dream, he obeyed God and accepted Jesus as his own son.

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Matthew 1: 18-25

Today's Prayer

Lord, I need your help to obey. Please make it clear to me when you call me to obey you and help me to not delay.

Video

Joseph's Song by Michael Card

<https://youtu.be/KT4VDAIaMwU>



Wisdom and Keeping Watch

"Counting down the days of Christmas or celebrating Advent has become a really big deal in our culture and our churches. Did you know that it has come about through human tradition and isn't explicitly taught in Scripture. This doesn't make Christmas and Advent a bad thing, but perhaps we should remind ourselves of God's perspective.

Jesus came the first time in what we now call Christmas. He came ultimately for salvation. Jesus is coming again but the next time will be for judgement. The Bible repeatedly tells us that although we can't know the day of His Second Coming, we should spend our lives in constant preparation for His return. Christmas Advent is fitting and good. Far better still is to look for His coming again."

But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Matthew 24:36-44

Today's Prayer

Today's prayer is the last verse in the Bible:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Video

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus Fehr Family Band

HYMN SING ONOWAY COMMUNITY HALL - TOMORROW AT 7:00 PM

<https://youtu.be/SZQBaTadtEE>



Hope is Better than Optimism

This week we are going to be reading through some of the prophecies made about the birth of a messiah to learn more about Hope. There will be some very informative videos from the Bible Project to help you learn how to growing in hope is more than just optimism or wishful thinking.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,
Ephesians 1:18

Today's Prayer

Lord, you are the source of my hope and strength, and you have stepped into my life. Help me to grow in hope as I learn more about You this week.

Video

The Birth of Jesus by The Bible Project

<https://youtu.be/SF-z3brILGQ>

**SEE THE FEHR FAMILY BAND TONIGHT
ONOWAY COMMUNITY HALL 7:00 PM**

<https://youtu.be/wcZJteCcxFA>



Hope and Creation

What hope does it give you to know that all things are made by God? It doesn't take a lot of looking to marvel at God's creativity. Have a look around your home today. How much of what is around you did you have a hand in making? Try your hand at creating today. Bake some cookies, draw a picture, or even just try combing your hair in a new way.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1: 1-3

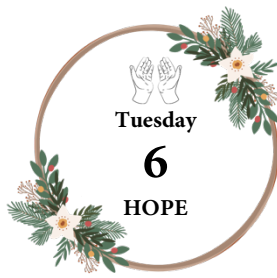
Today's Prayer

God, I am amazed at how creative you are! You made everything in the world around me, the sun in the sky and the birds outside my home. And yet you lowered yourself and came in human form even a baby in a manger. Your ways are beyond my ways and Your thoughts beyond my thoughts.

Video

The Hope of Christmas by Matthew West

<https://youtu.be/27rMrWqJsNA>



Sharing Hope

A good part of our joy in knowing Jesus is our saviour is being invited into mission with him. In this Advent season how is God calling on you proclaim the good news, bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim freedom, and comfort those who mourn? How are you living authentically in your home, church, and community?

*"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and
release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the
day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who
grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy
instead of mourning and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair."*

Isaiah 61: 1-3

Today's Prayer

Lord, help me to be someone who lives in a real way with those around me. Help me to understand that my hope is only in You and give me the ability to share that with others.

Video

Truth Be Told by Carly Pearce and Matthew West

<https://youtu.be/xC2wk1w09U8>



Hope in the Coming King (MESSIAH)

God's plan for Christmas was predicted throughout the Old Testament - even as early as Genesis 3. The greatest reason for people early in the Bible to have hope was in the coming of a Messiah, which means "Anointed One". Messiah was a term used to describe kings like King David, but it was predicted that there would come a time when THE MESSIAH would appear and would be God's intended fulfillment of all kings who came before. Jesus and is God's Anointed One, or THE Messiah.

"“The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

“In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land.”

Jeremiah 33:14-15

Today’s Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for coming into this world through Jesus the Messiah. I look forward to the day when you will come again.

Video

Messiah by the Bible Project

<https://youtu.be/3dEh25pduQ8>



Hope for Justice

We don't know the reason that some are seemingly "lucky" in life, while others struggle simply to exist. But we can rejoice that "every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low" when the Lord returns.

"A voice of one calling:

*"In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway
for our God.*

*Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground
shall become level, the rugged places a plain.*

And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Isaiah 40:3-5

Today's Prayer

Spend a minute remembering in prayer someone you know that lost a loved one in the last few years.

Dear Lord, I please comfort the weary and the broken hearted today.

Video

"The Gift by Joey & Rory (Joey passed away of cancer at 40 years of age in 2016)
<https://youtu.be/UXRfXVw7xOA>



Hope, Peace, War, and Pain

Today's thoughts may be filled with hope but they are set against the contrast that we live in a broken world, where nations are fighting, and so are neighbours, families and friends. Don't you long for the day when God will come as Shepherd and Ruler to bring lasting peace? In the meantime, if you are brave today, wrestle with this controversial Christmas song presented by a former church kid who has gone astray. Miley Cyrus.

“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Ezekiel 34:11-16

Today's Prayer

Dear Lord, I long for the day when you return and bring peace on earth. In the meantime, help me to be your vessel of peace in my home, my church, and beyond. Lord, I pray for peace and hope for those countries at war today.

Video

"Happy xMas (War is Over)

by Miley Cyrus, Mark Ronson ft. Sean Ono Lennon

<https://youtu.be/pzkg3kBIv88>



Hope that Grows

Are you more hopeful or less hopeful this year than last year? When we place our faith solely in Jesus, it allows us to have a new perspective on our struggles and what God is trying to do in our lives. Be sure to check out the video this week for a good overview of what the Bible teaches about HOPE.

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5: 1-11

Today's Prayer

Dear God, help me to get your perspective on hope. I want to thank you for the difficulties I experience because they are producing perseverance, character, and hope in my life.

Video

Hope by The Bible Project

<https://youtu.be/4WYNBjJSYvE>



POWER!

Different things come to mind when we hear the word "POWER"?

Thunder and lightning.

Electricity that lights up our homes, highways, towns, and cities.

Horsepower that drives our vehicles and farm equipment.

What is the most powerful thing you have seen? _____

What is the most powerful car you have driven? _____

Who is the most powerful person you've known? _____

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
Ephesians 3:16*

Today's Prayer

God, I pray that out of your glorious riches You may strengthen me with power through Your Spirit in my inner being

Video

Little Drummer Boy by For King and Country

<https://youtu.be/NzEX3QMuVPM>



Power in the Real World

To understand the upside down backwards view we have of power, one only need spend some time in the world into which Jesus was born.

In and of itself Israel would not have been attractive to the Romans in their empire building. It was considered a backwater on the edge of the empire, a place where people passed through on their way somewhere else.

Why might God have chosen a place such as this?

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

Luke 2: 1-3

Today's Prayer

Dear Lord, I pray for peace in our country and for a new sense of hope. Grant wisdom to our leaders so that we might live peaceful and quiet lives and ultimately come to know the hope of Christ. I pray for those who are needing food and clothing. Please provide for them their daily bread.

Video

Christmas Shoes by Newsong

<https://youtu.be/YNX7d1ETWd8>



Power from a Small Town

What is the smallest town you know of? What is that town's claim to fame, if anything? Although Bethlehem was a small town it had a couple of claims to fame. First, it was mentioned in a well known Bible prophecy. Also, Bethlehem is called the city of David because it is where his father came from.

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."
Micah 5:2*

Today's Prayer

Pray for someone from your hometown that you haven't spoken to in years.

Video

The Christmas Story by the Bible Project

<https://youtu.be/OLezoUvOEOQ>



Power and a Young Girl

Mary, the mother of Jesus would have been around 14 years of age when she became a mom for the first time. Who has less power than a single, pregnant, teenage girl in an ancient, patriarchal, foreign occupied territory? And yet, Mary seemed to have more poise and confidence than old-man Zechariah who chose to not believe God.

"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called[b] the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her."

Luke 1: 26-38

Today's Prayer

Think of a teenage or young girl you know. Pray that God would give them grace, faith, confidence and power like that of Mary. If appropriate, call or text the young girl and tell them you are praying for them.

Video

Christmas Hallelujah by Caleb and Kelsey

<https://youtu.be/V9ORdDGzU8>



Power and the Poor

Archeologist and historians tell us that about 93% of those living in the Roman Empire were subsistence... they only made enough to give themselves basic shelter and some food. Again, we see God doing something incredibly backwards from our perspective. Among these down and outs, the shepherds were the lowest of the low. In a culture that focused on ritualistic cleanliness, none were lower than those who lived far from the temple where they could go to be cleansed, who lived with animals, and so on.

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

Luke 2:8-10

Today's Prayer

Think of someone you know who doesn't have as much as you do, especially if they would fit the category of "poor." Pray for them and ask God to show you how you can be a friend of those who have less. If appropriate, give them a phone call, ask about their day and tell them you are praying for them.

Video

Mary's Boy Child by Boney M

<https://youtu.be/0HamLPzAbuA>



Power and Justice

Again, we see in the Christmas story God's merciful plan to raise up the humble, feed the hungry, while dealing with the proud and rich.

Who is your poorest friend? _____

Who is your richest friend? _____

*And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.*

*From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great
things for me—holy is his name.*

*His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has
performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their
inmost thoughts.*

He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

*He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his
descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."*

Luke 1: 46-55

Today's Prayer

Pray for the people you identified as poorest and richest friends.

Video

Mary's Song by Amy Grant

<https://youtu.be/FWo3qlqyW1c>



Power and Servanthood

We would be wise to remember that God's view of power is not ours. What power we have comes from God. When we empty ourselves, he steps in. So back to the prayer from Ephesians, when we pray for God's power to strengthen us, he will answer, but we receive that power when we lower ourselves.

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:5-11

Today's Prayer

Lord, help me today to be not too proud to be used by You. I remember that Jesus went as low as He could go in becoming a servant and dying on the cross. Help me to talk more about Jesus and less about me.

Video

Go Tell it on the Mountain by Zach Williams

https://youtu.be/AyIN0kh7_Q0



Love's Perfect Gift

“She touches the face of the infant-God. How long was your journey! This baby had overlooked the universe. These rags keeping him warm were the robes of eternity. His golden throne room had been abandoned in favor of a dirty sheep pen. And worshiping angels had been replaced with kind but bewildered shepherds. Meanwhile, the city hums. The merchants are unaware that God has visited their planet. The innkeeper would never believe that he had just sent God into the cold.”

— Max Lucado, *God Came Near: God's Perfect Gift*

*and may you have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,
Ephesians 3:18*

Today's Prayer

“Those who missed His Majesty's arrival that night missed it not because of evil acts or malice; no, they missed it because they simply weren't looking. Little has changed in the last two thousand years, has it?”

Max Lucado

Lord, help me not to miss Your great love this Christmas.

Video

Away in a Manger by Phil Wickham

<https://youtu.be/aXXpJeXCJ1w>



Return to Love

Can we even begin to grasp how much God loves us? Spend some time pondering what Jesus gave up being born as a man. As you read through the Christmas story from Luke this week, reflect on God's great love to us, his great love for you, and how you are changed knowing of this love and what it cost him to show it to you. Do you need to return to loving Him?

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us...
John 1:14

Today's Prayer

God, I remember my first love. I remember the time when I first came to know you as my Savior. Please forgive me of my sins and give me back some of those feelings. Help me to do the things I first did when I came to You.

Video

Return to Love by Andrea Bocelli
<https://youtu.be/kmKaBYZgxpY>



Love and Joy

Who is the youngest baby you know? Consider calling or texting the mother today. Just tell her you've been thinking about her and the baby.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Luke 2: 4-7

Today's Prayer

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let Earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing

Video

Joy to the World by Pentatonix

<https://youtu.be/-Xo64Q2ucQ8>

<https://youtu.be/Sf5XYmNlhpY>



Love and Favor

There seems to be a close tie between ""love"" and ""favor"". God didn't just say, ""I love you,"" but His love was expressed in kindness when He sent Jesus into the world.

Give some thought to how you love today. Do people know you love them. More importantly, do they know you ""like"" them and you have ""favor"" towards them?

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

Luke 2: 8-15

Today's Prayer

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 the angelic host proclaim
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"

Video

Hark the Herald by The Spirituals Choir

<https://youtu.be/XmtKIOB-0-I>



Love in a Manger

"What is your favorite part of nativity scene?

"Wide awake is Mary. My, how young she looks! Her head rests on the soft leather of Joseph's saddle. The pain has been eclipsed by wonder. She looks into the face of the baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. At this point in history, the human being who best understands who God is and what he is doing is a teenage girl in a smelly stable. She can't take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. So this is he. She remembers the words of the angel. "His kingdom will never end."¹

— Max Lucado, *God Came Near: God's Perfect Gift*"

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Luke 2: 16-20

Today's Prayer

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with thee there.

Video

The Manger by Anne Wilson and Josh Turner

<https://youtu.be/kvskAZu3VB4>



Love's Perfect Timing

"One of the most difficult Christmas songs to sing is Angels We Have Heard on High. It is difficult because we are tempted to rush the timing because we run out of wind.

God was not rushed in sending Jesus. He came into the world exactly when the ""set time had fully come.""

Try singing along with Andrea Bocelli after you read the Bible verse and see if you can keep time."

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship
Galatians 4: 4-5

Today's Prayer

Gloria In Excelsis Deo

Glory in the highest

Video

Angels We Have Heard on High by Andrea Bocelli

https://youtu.be/B5iaV989_5M



Love for the Whole World

How do you think you would have felt if Jesus came from Moscow? How would a North Korean have felt if Jesus was from North Dakota. God so loved the whole world...

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

Matthew 2: 1-2

Today's Prayer

Noel, noel

Oh night, oh night divine

Noel, noel

Oh night, oh holy night

Video

O Holy Night by Celtic Worship

<https://youtu.be/Ug7DjVvflrI>



Love to Share

Wish someone a Merry Christmas today in another language. Do it with a huge smile on your face!

French: Joyeux Noël

German: Frohe Weihnachten

Spanish: Feliz Navidad

Italian: Buon Natale

Portuguese: Feliz Natal

Dutch: Vrolijk kerstfeest

Romanian: Crăciun fericit

Polish: Wesołych świąt Bożego Narodzenia

Swedish: God Jul

Czech: Veselé Vánoce

*Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises
upon you and his glory appears over you.*

Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Isaiah 60:1-3

Today's Prayer

Wish God Merry Christmas in English and the other ten languages.
He understands them all!

Video

Feliz Navidad – Jose Feliciano featuring FaWiJo

<https://youtu.be/0UVUW11FENs>