

**MONDAY 12.23.24 - Matthew 1:18-25**

Would you have had the faith we see in Joseph as we read our scripture for today. He could have gone to his friends with this experience, and they would have likely told him, "Come on Joseph don't be stupid, that was just a dream". He could have gone to Sigmund Freud, and he would have told him, "This a dilution based on wish fulfillment desires". Instead, Joseph chose to believe what God was telling him and, his faith paved the way for the messiah's birth. How much better we would be if we like Joseph chose to believe God rather than trying to justify why not to believe. Are there areas in your life where God is speaking and asking you to believe in faith what He is telling you? Joseph was not sorry, he believed. If you choose to believe in faith what God is saying to you today, you will not be sorry either.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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**TUESDAY 12.24.24 - Hebrews 10:5-7**

Hebrews 10 contains a quotation from Psalm 40—which is a Messianic Psalm. A Messianic Psalm is a psalm which predicts something of the person or work of the coming Messiah. Hebrews 10:5-7 are the words of Jesus. It's His perspective on His First Coming. It's the Story of Christmas according to Jesus, and it informs us that Jesus came to earth as a man to pay for our sins. As C. S. Lewis writes, "The Son of God became man to enable men to become the sons of God."

Tomorrow you'll be celebrating Christmas and exchanging gifts with others. God offers a gift to you, but you must accept His free gift of eternal life. The way you do that is by putting your trust in Jesus. If you've never done that before, receive God's gift today! Place your trust completely in Christ alone for eternal life.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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**WEDNESDAY 12.25.24 - Luke 2:21-35**

Merry Christmas! May you have a joyfilled celebration of Christ's birth today!

The Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32) is replete with references from the prophet Isaiah—Isaiah 40:5, 52:10, 42:6, and 49:6. Isaiah and other prophets foretold that the Messiah would come and offer salvation to all people—Jews and Gentiles alike.

So, Christmas is about the birth of Jesus. God left heaven and came to earth, being born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life and then died on a cross as our substitute to pay for our sins. He offers us forgiveness and eternal life with Him as a free gift. All you need to do is accept it. All you need to do is trust in Jesus. Have you done that? If so, rejoice in the fact that you are a child of God and heaven is your home. If not, accept God's gift of eternal life to you this Christmas day.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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**THURSDAY 12.26.24 - Numbers 6:24-26**

Tucked away in an otherwise inconspicuous passage we find one of the greatest of Biblical poems! Its familiarity to us can lead us to take its content for granted. Consider:

The center of the blessing is the presence and person of God Himself. Each verse grows and builds upon the one before it but always centered on "The Lord".

Our Father's face shines with grace! How the Hebrews would have cherished God's grace upon them - past, present and future! Knowing more fully His grace, how can we not be even more thankful!

His countenance brings peace! How the Israelites longed for peace while striving to keep the Law of God! Oh, Christian! How much fuller do we know a peace which passes understanding purchased for us by the cross of Christ! We have a Father who has adopted us into His family! The Lord bless you and keep you!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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**FRIDAY 12.27.24 - Psalm 32:1-2**

When things go well for us or when we reach our achievement, we tend to think that we are blessed. When we gather well and our family, health and wealth are in the black, we tend to think that we are blessed. It was asked in class one day, if things do not go as planned and we do not succeed, then is God still good? The import of that question was, are we still blessed? So often our hearts may say yes but our heads will say no. Today's verses demonstrate that the things mentioned above may well be blessings of a singular type. But the greatest of all blessings is to know that our greatest detriments have been removed. Our greatest failing has been recompensed. Our sins have been forgiven and our iniquities are not counted against us. Praise God!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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## E2 GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

### SUNDAY MORNINGS - 9:40am

- Kids** CHILDREN'S CHURCH (Ages 4 – 4th Grade)  
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level  
NURSERY (through Age 3) \*9:40AM ONLY  
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level
- Youth** E2 CLASS (5th – 12th Grade)  
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)
- Adults** **WINTER QUARTER** - began December 1<sup>st</sup>  
LOCATION: B8-10 - Gene Steinruck - began Dec.1<sup>st</sup>.  
**EXPLORE THE BIBLE - Exodus and Leviticus** remind us that imperfect people can depend on a perfect God to lead them through whatever wilderness they face.  
LOCATION: B11 - Teacher: TBA - began Dec.1<sup>st</sup>.  
**BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE**  
**Looking Forward to Christmas** Be reminded that Christmas is, first and foremost, a celebration of Christ's coming to earth.  
LOCATION: B1-2 - Joel Day - began Dec.1<sup>st</sup>  
**GOD NEVER GIVES UP ON YOU** - What Jacob's Story Teaches Us About Grace, Mercy, and God's Relentless Love.  
LOCATION: B11 - Shawn Devlin - began Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>  
**THE HEART OF WORSHIP** - Learn how Scripture tells us God is the One we are to worship, and it shows us the ways we are to engage in worship, so we are drawn into a deeper walk with Him.

### SUNDAY EVENINGS - 6:00pm

- Kids** MESSIAH KIDS (Kindergarten – 4th Grade)  
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level  
**No Meetings Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>**
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)  
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)  
**No Meetings Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>**
- Adults** LOCATION: Worship Center  
**No Services Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>**

## WINTER E2 SMALL GROUPS

**WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS:** Join us for 11 weeks of food, fellowship, and Bible Study! Titled End Times & Spiritual Warfare, this group will study What Happens Next? By Max Lucado and Spiritual Warfare is Real by Jim Cymbala. Study begins Wednesday January 15<sup>th</sup>. The meal begins at 6:00pm followed by the study at 7:00 pm. Sign up at the information table, connect card, or call the office!

TO SIGN UP OR REQUEST MORE INFORMATION FOR ANY OF THESE GROUPS OR CLASSES, USE THE CONNECTION CARD IN THE BULLETIN. THANK YOU.

## **Luke 2:8-14** **The Songs of Christmas:** **The Angels' Song of Proclamation**


The Song of the Angels is referred to as the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, which means "Glory to God in the Highest." From this song, two important spiritual truths emerge.

1. The Meaning of Christmas Needs To Be Shared
2. God Wants To Use You To Share the Meaning of Christmas

### Life Application

How to focus your attention on Jesus this Christmas:

- Give thanks for Jesus—the "Bread of Life"—before you eat dinner tonight.
- Read the nativity story in Luke 2:1-20 at an evening meal.
- Study the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, and Micah 5:2 in your devotions this week.
- As a family project, make a Christmas poster that focuses on Jesus' birth.
- Ask one person, "Do you know the original meaning of Christmas?"
- Give 10% of what you spend on Christmas gifts to a mission agency.
- Distribute Christmas tracts.
- Invite an unsaved friend to a Christmas Eve service.
- Decorate your Christmas tree with crosses rather than ornaments.
- Give the nativity scene a place of greater prominence than your other decorations.

 Edifying and Equipping Every Day

TAKING OUR NEXT STEP TOGETHER IN THE WORD



## December 23 - December 27

### INTRODUCTION:

Part of our purpose and strategy as a church is to Edify and Equip (E2) every believer. We desire to see every person take their next step with God, both individually as well as with families and small groups (E2 Communities). This devotional is to aid us in just that. We invite you to join us in daily devotion.

### OVERVIEW:

Monday's and Tuesday's readings will be a follow up on Sunday's message from December 22<sup>nd</sup>, "The Songs of Christmas", with Pastor Doug Lyon. Wednesday's through Friday's devotions will help prepare us for the message on December 29<sup>th</sup>, "The Songs of Christmas", with Pastor Doug Lyon.

### KEY/MEMORY VERSE:

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:11