

**MONDAY 12.30.24 - Proverbs 3:5-7**

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.”

Trust, a life of trusting in God. It is this alone that will allow us to experience the true blessings of the Christian life. The Bible says trust in, have faith in, believe in, be confident in, and rest in the Lord. At the heart of each of these is the idea of trusting the Lord. To know God in such a deep way that we can put whatever we are facing into His hands with confidence that He is in complete control and wants what is best for us. It is then that we will experience His peace in a way that the world cannot understand. As you travel into the New Year, I hope that you can say as the song writer so eloquently put it, “Many things about tomorrow I don’t seem to understand, but I know who holds tomorrow and I know who holds my hand”.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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**TUESDAY 12.31.24 - Ephesians 1:3**

A gift or favor bestowed by God is the meaning of “Blessing.” While living on this earth, Jesus said we would have troubles. He was true to His word. All of us can attest to the troubles we endure day in and day out. Most of it results from our own sin, but some is the nature of this cursed world. Finally some comes from the evil one, who bedevils us and all the world because he knows his end is sure and is coming. Yet as this year ends, take heart and sing in hope. If you need a blessing look to Jesus, who is himself the source of all God’s blessing. Only God is Good, and Jesus is God. Jesus is Good and gives good gifts to all his children. As you look to him today, thank him for He has already promised you every spiritual blessing in heaven, his home, already!! Happy New Year!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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**WEDNESDAY 1.1.25 - John 15:7-16**

Through faith alone apart from works, we obtain an eternal relationship with God (John 1:12, 3:16, 5:24, 6:47, 11:25). John 3:16—the gospel in a nutshell—assures us: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” However, only through works can we obtain a closeness or intimacy with the Lord that is noticeable to others. Our faith may be very genuine, but others cannot see our faith. We will not experience victorious Christian living without a life filled with good works. Through them, we earn the reputation of being a “friend of God.”

Jesus is the vine; believers are the branches. We must abide or remain in vital connection with our Savior in order to produce the spiritual fruit (good works) He desires for us to bring forth.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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**THURSDAY 1.2.25 - Jeremiah 17:7-8**

Reading a passage like today’s, I always picture the majestic willow trees we see along creeks, streams and ponds in our area! They have aggressive roots that seek out water. They are the first to leaf out in the spring and the last to lose their foliage. Growing near sources of water, they can weather long dry spells in the summer.

Jeremiah uses this imagery to describe the one who places their trust in the Lord! Our confidence is in Him who nourishes, strengthens, comforts, and protects us!

Do we *desire* the refreshing words of God found in His Word, pursuing them in earnest? Do we find in Him alone comfort and strength for the trials of our lives? Do we run to Him when times seem dry and hard? Are we bearing fruit, seeking to be more and more like Christ?

Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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**FRIDAY 1.3.25 - Psalm 92:12-15**

Physical growth usually creeps along almost unnoticed. But during adolescence a boy may spurt up 6 inches in the course of a summer and a girl may blossom overnight. Looking back is when the growth is obvious.

The same is true of our spiritual lives. Usually we mature slowly, by our daily disciplines. Then come some occasions, when due to the stresses of life brought on either by our own sin, or the world’s influence or evil’s temptations, we struggle hard through a trial. If in the midst of that trial, we continue in our disciplines, meditate on the Word of God, pray and look outward and upward, we often grow. We look back afterwards and see the spurt that has occurred.

Even in old age, God gives to his children wisdom and honor, providing fruit to be enjoyed by other believers and the world itself. Love, joy, peace and all the rest continue as evidence of our growth.

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 - begins 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 Messiah Kids Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>**
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)  
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)  
**No Youth Group Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>**
- Adults** LOCATION: Worship Center

## 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 2:29-32** **The Songs of Christmas:** **Simeon's Song of Expectation**

Simeon's song is known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, meaning "Now Dismiss." It is a song of expectation. There are a few major expectations that many people have during the holiday season.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Expectation

During this time of year, people hope something will happen that will allow them to feel the warmth of the "holiday spirit."

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Expectation

Most people expect to give and receive gifts. That is why stores put up their Christmas displays in October. They are banking on the fact that giving and getting is a big part of what the season is all about.


3. \_\_\_\_\_ Expectation

People believe they ought to experience the love of family and friends at a deeper level during this time of year.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Expectation

Mary gives birth to Jesus. Eight days later, Jesus is circumcised according to the Jewish law as found in Leviticus 12:3. Thirty-three days after this, Joseph, Mary, and her newborn son travel five miles from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. They go to the Temple to dedicate the child to the Lord according to Exodus 13:2, 12.

This season is about the birth of Jesus. God left heaven and came to earth, being born of Mary. He lived a sinless life and then died on a cross as our substitute to pay for our sins. He offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life with Him as a free gift. All a person needs to do is to accept it, trusting in Jesus as Savior.

 Edifying and Equipping Every Day

TAKING OUR NEXT STEP TOGETHER IN THE WORD



## December 30 – January 3

### 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 29<sup>th</sup>, "The Songs of Christmas", with Pastor Doug Lyon. Wednesday's through Friday's devotions will help prepare us for the message on January 5<sup>th</sup>, "Secrets of the Vine", 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