

FOOD FOR THOUGHT *(continued)*

TAKING IT HOME

1. Can you think of a time in your life when God felt distant or absent? What happened? How did that experience ultimately impact your faith?

2. Are there situations in your life where God hasn't answered your prayer in the way you thought he would? Jeremiah said, "God's silence does not mean he is ABSENT." In what ways does this viewpoint of the Christmas Story help you to keep your faith intact?

3. Read **Philippians 2:5-7**. These verses tell us that Jesus did not cling to his rights as being equal to God, but set them aside to establish relationship with humanity! What 3 adjectives would you use to describe Jesus' behavior in these verses?

4. Christmas is the story of reconciliation between us and God! We love God by loving people created in his image. Is there anyone in your life that you need to be reconciled to, apologize to, forgive, or reconnect with during this season?

MESSAGE NOTES

Reasons For The Season // Week 1

The Christmas story begins with a PROMISE.

The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." **Genesis 12:1-3**

"I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring salvation to the ends of the earth."
Isaiah 49:6

"My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offering will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations," says the Lord Almighty. **Malachi 1:11**

3 Christmas reminders:

1. God can be TRUSTED to keep his promises.

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you... Don't be afraid, Mary. For you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" **Luke 1:26-33**

2. God's silence does not mean he is ABSENT.

3. Christmas is the story of RECONCILIATION between us and God!

MEMORY VERSE:

And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world. But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.

Galatians 4:4-5

