



A GUIDE FOR REDEEMER ROUND ROCK  
BY REDEEMER HUTTO





Since the fall in Genesis, mankind has lived between two Advents. The word *advent* means coming or arrival. During the first advent God's chosen people, the Israelites, lived anticipating the arrival of the promised Messiah - Jesus. We now live in the second advent awaiting the promise that Jesus will return and one day redeem all creation back to good. No more sin, evil, shame, or pain. As we wait, Jesus has left us with a way to walk with him if we repent and believe through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are reminded of the Gospel and to look to our promised hope. He walks with us just as He walked with the Israelites in the Old Testament and with the disciples in the New Testament.

The Old Testament is full of accounts that show God's faithfulness to His people and how He always follows through with His word in His timing, not ours. *Testament* means *covenant or promise*. Throughout advent we will look at how God revealed Himself to His people. We'll also see how their trust in God allowed them to live with hope, joy, peace, love, and grace, even when the circumstances of life seemed weighty or impossible.

This resource provides devotionals, scriptures, prayers, prompts, and worship options to help you focus on the reason for the season, Jesus! Week's 1-5 are represented by one of the five Advent candles. Just like the church has been practicing for many years, during each of the weeks of advent we will be lighting a candle in our Sunday gathering to reflect on hope, joy, peace, love, and grace this season. This is also something you can do with your family at home.

**Week 1 - Hope**  
**Week 2 - Joy**  
**Week 3 - Peace**  
**Week 4 - Love**  
**Week 5 - Grace**  
**Week 6 - Abide**



**ADVENT  
WORSHIP  
PLAYLIST**

This season is very busy and can often feel chaotic and not restful. We encourage you to contemplate and celebrate each week's theme by making it a priority to slow down and seek rest. We hope then you'll be able to focus on Christ more than the many things you may be tempted to chase during this time of year. Because God's rest renews our mind, body, and soul, we can experience rest even when we are mentally and physically drained. His rest allows us to function from the Spirit as we depend on Him through our days. This does not come naturally to mankind. Hebrews 3:7-4,13 talks about how our disobedience and unbelief often lead to an inability to dwell in God's rest. The only rest that is filling to our souls comes from God. Depend on Him and prioritize time to pray, read scripture, repent of sin, actively remember and enjoy God, and abide in His faithfulness.



# HOPE

When God created the earth, everything was, “very good.” No evil or sin existed. Adam and Eve, the first two people in this world, lived with God in the Garden of Eden. One day they were deceived, choosing to do the one thing God asked them not to do... eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their disobedience opened their eyes to both good and evil. Therefore, Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden.

The world as we know it is now full of evil and we are all born into sin. Romans 3:23 tells us that we all have sinned and are separated from the presence of God. Thankfully, God had a plan to reconcile us, His creation, back to Him. God promised to send a Savior, one who would save us from our sin and eventually redeem the whole world back to “very good.” Do you know who that Savior is? Jesus! God’s people, the Israelites, waited many years before God sent Jesus. Let’s look at how God revealed Jesus’ coming to Mary. **Read Luke 1:26-35 or He’s Here in The Jesus Storybook Bible**

## WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THIS PASSAGE?

### DEFINE “HOLY”

### WHY DOES GOD SAY, “THE CHILD WILL BE CALLED HOLY?” WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

We all come into this world the same way, but Jesus’ birth was different. He was not born into sin like the rest of us. He lived a sinless life, died, and came back to life so that we would one day be able to live in the presence of God forever. Jesus is our Hope!

**What is hope?** A worldly perspective of hope always ends with a question or a wondering if something will happen. For example: *I hope I make the sports team. I hope I get the toy I want. I hope I get a job promotion.* Now you fill in the blank. *I hope...* None of these are guaranteed. The Bible tells us that hope that comes from God is a guarantee. It will end with a period, not a question mark. When God promises something He ALWAYS fulfills His promises. We can trust Him. We call this biblical hope - *hope that trusts and knows that God’s promises will be fulfilled.*

## DIG DEEPER

**Genesis 1-4** (creation, fall, and sin) **What hope do you see in this passage?** (Gen. 3:15)

**Isaiah 11:1-10** (Prophecy about judgment, the redeemed earth, and that one day all creation will live in unity with God)

**What are some promises that God made in Scripture?**

**Where in Scripture do you see those promises fulfilled?**

# A PRAYER OF HOPE



When Jesus was walking with the disciples they asked him how they ought to pray. We know this prayer as The Lord's Prayer. It is found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. During advent we will use The Lord's Prayer as a guide for our own prayers. This week's focus is on Hope. The prayer starts by acknowledging "Our Father in heaven." When you pray, practice reflecting on who God truly is as your Father. Remember His holiness and the biblical hope we have in Him. Here is an example:

**Our Father in heaven**, creator and sustainer of all. The one who holds tomorrow. I praise you because you are a Father who desires to be near to your creation once again. **Hallowed be your name.** You alone are good and you are the only one who can keep our every promise. I praise you and thank you for making a way through Jesus, and the blood that he shed, to cover my sin so that we can live in your presence. You are my one and only true hope in this sinful and broken world. Teach me to live in light of your hope and rest in your presence knowing all things are in your hands. Help me to remember to look to you and not the broken circumstances I face and know in this world. I pray **your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

## LOVE GOD: CONTEMPLATE AND CELEBRATE

This season should be a time of celebration that causes us to remember and rejoice in the hope we have in Jesus. However, we are often guilty of chasing worldly hope that leaves us weary and dreading the season. Prioritize time to reflect and look for God's hand moving in your days. This will help you continually rest in His hope!

### ASK GOD TO HELP YOU REFLECT ON YOUR HOPE IN CHRIST

*Journal or discuss your thoughts with gratitude as you wait on the Lord and celebrate this season.*

### HOW IS YOUR HOPE AS A BELIEVER DIFFERENT FROM THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD?

### CELEBRATE THROUGH WORSHIP

*The QR code on the intro page links to an Advent playlist. Listen, sing, dance, or just let these songs be playing in your house through this Advent season.*

## LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

We've been called to love God and our neighbors. **Ask God to provide opportunities for you to share your hope in Jesus with someone this season. It may be a conversation, a shared meal, a gift you make or bake, a letter you write, or something else.** Remember, the goal is not to do all the things. The goal is to be open and willing to move as the Spirit leads. Do not fear. He will be with you wherever you go.



# JOY

Last week we discussed that the Israelites waited many years before God sent Jesus. How did this group of people become God's chosen people? Many years after Adam and Eve, God called a man named Abraham to follow him. God made a covenant with him stating that He (God) would make Abraham a great nation and give him descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. Years passed from the time that God made His covenant with Abraham and he and his wife, Sarah, still had no children. They became discouraged and took matters into their own hands. As a result of their impatience, great heartache was experienced. Years later, God told Abraham and Sarah, who were now very old, that they would have a baby. The next year, just as God said, Sarah gave birth to Isaac!

Wasn't Abraham going to be a great nation and have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky? How was this possible at their age? God's thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways (*Isaiah 55:8-9*). Great joy would come through Isaac's birth because God, through Abraham, created a great nation from Isaac and his descendants. Just as God promised, He delivered! Through Abraham's offspring, the Messiah would come. Let's look at how God revealed himself to Zechariah and Elizabeth, Abraham's descendants, who are also advanced in age with no children. **Read Luke 1:5-24, 36-45**

**WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THIS PASSAGE?**

**WHAT WAS SO SPECIAL ABOUT ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH'S BABY?**

**THE BABY IN ELIZABETH'S WOMB LEAPED FOR \_\_\_\_\_ IN MARY'S PRESENCE.**

**DO YOU EVER FIND YOURSELF GETTING TIRED OR DISCOURAGED WHEN WAITING FOR SOMETHING?**

**HOW DID YOU FEEL ONCE YOU RECEIVED IT?**

Zechariah and Elizabeth were faithful, God-fearing people. Just like Abraham and Sarah they also had to wait on God's timing to experience the joy of a child. They too would have a child that would live to glorify God and prepare the way of the Lord - John The Baptist. All that we celebrate during Advent is for God's glory and a reminder to us that God keeps his promises. Even when it doesn't seem possible, God does the impossible!

We are no longer waiting for the coming Messiah but we are waiting on Jesus' return to redeem all creation back to "very good." Our time of waiting doesn't have to be filled with impatience and worry about whether or not God will fulfill His promises. Just like we can see clearly through the Psalms, in the waiting you can experience rest and joy. This will never be experienced as long as you are living according to your own will and way. Joy comes from God alone through the power of the Holy Spirit. Depend on Him to be your source of joy.

## DIG DEEPER

**Genesis 12, 15, 17** (*God's covenant with Abraham*)

**Isaiah 9:2-3, 35**

# A PRAYER OF JOY



Our focus this week is *Joy*. We learned in our devotional that joy comes from the Lord as we seek to follow His will and depend on His timing. This week, in your own words, continue to reflect on who God is as your Holy Father. The next part of the Lord's prayer leads us to pray for God's will... ***Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*** Here is an example:

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. I pray, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Holy God, Father in heaven, help me to desire your will above my own, your way and not mine. Teach me to trust and obey you even in the waiting and fill me with a restful heart and a joyful spirit as I walk in my days. Remind me that you are with me and will never leave or forsake me. Fill me with strength and boldness to move as you lead. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.***

## LOVE GOD: CONTEMPLATE AND CELEBRATE

Reflect on and look for God's hand moving in your days. This will help you continually rest in His hope and live in His joy.

**TAKE TIME TO CONSIDER THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HAPPINESS (FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS) AND JOY (COMES ONLY FROM GOD).**

*Journal or discuss your thoughts on the differences.*

**ASK GOD TO HELP YOU REFLECT ON THE SOURCE OF YOUR JOY.**

Journal and discuss your thoughts with gratitude as you wait on the Lord and celebrate this season. This may come in time and may not happen immediately, so allow it to be a part of your regular prayer time with God.

**CELEBRATE THROUGH WORSHIP.**

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## LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

We've been called to love God and our neighbors. **Think of someone you know who is struggling this season and pray that God would fill them with His joy. Write them a note or do something special to let them know you are praying for them to have joy through Jesus.** Remember, the goal is not to do all the things. The goal is to be open and willing to move as the Spirit leads. Do not fear. He will be with you wherever you go.



From Abraham came Isaac, Jacob, and then the 12 tribes of Israel. They are known as the Israelites, God's chosen people. Moses, a descendent of Abraham of the tribe of Levi, was called to deliver God's people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. During the exodus from Egypt God led them with a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night across the Red Sea on dry land. He provided food and water for them along the way. God was leading them to *The Promised Land*, that would be flowing with milk and honey. He desired them to live well in the land He promised to Abraham. Because of their unbelief, the Israelites had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. Their unbelief led to idol worship and unrest. Throughout the Old Testament Israel continually forgot God and all He had done for them. They lived in a continual cycle of sin, remembrance, confession, and repentance, while waiting for the promised one. Let's look at how God revealed the the promised one, who would bring peace to this broken and sinful world, to a group of lowly shepherds. **Read Luke 2:1-20 or *The Light Of The Whole World* in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*.**

**WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THIS PASSAGE?**

**WHERE WAS JESUS BORN?**

**WHAT WAS SO SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THE ENCOUNTER THAT THE SHEPHERDS HAD WITH THE ANGEL?**

**HOW DID GOD AFFIRM WHO JESUS WAS TO MARY AND JOSEPH?**

**DO YOU THINK JOSEPH AND MARY UNDERSTOOD WHO THEIR SON WAS?**

A multitude of angels praised God and said, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!*" The birth of this tiny baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger was a sign to the lowly shepherds, Mary, and Joseph. The promise God made to Israel many years ago about the coming Messiah was here! He was born during a time of unrest to bring peace on earth to anyone who would submit themselves to Him.

We celebrate Christmas each year not just because it is Jesus' birthday but it is a reminder in our time of waiting that God, through Jesus, keeps His promises. Jesus left heaven, came in the flesh to dwell among us, lived a sinless life, died a death He did not deserve, and rose in glory so that we can live in peace with God. Through Jesus, God's wrath was satisfied. Even as we celebrate each year, we too continually do as the Israelites did and live in a cycle of sin, remembrance, confession, and repentance. While we are waiting for Jesus to return, peace within us is possible. Peace comes as we submit to Jesus, put away our idols, and depend on Him alone for everything. Fear, being rooted in unbelief, kept the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years. Unbelief is a sin that's rooted in all of us. Peace will come as we surrender and allow the Holy Spirit to help us live confidently aware of His presence in our life no matter the situation. True peace leads to rest in your soul. Isaiah 26:3 says, "*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.*"

## DIG DEEPER

**Nehemiah 9:6-31** (A prayer that reflects on Israel's past from Abraham to The Promised Land)

**Mark 4: 35-41** (In the middle of a storm, Jesus rests peacefully)

**Isaiah 9:6-7** (Prophecy)



# A PRAYER OF PEACE



Our focus this week is peace. From the beginning, mankind has sought more than God. We think satisfaction will come through the many things we chase after, and yet we struggle to chase after Jesus - the Prince of Peace. It is through Christ alone that we can have peace. As you pray this week, continue to reflect on who God is as your Holy Father and pray for His will to be done. The next part of the Lord's prayer leads us to pray for God's provision. **Give us this day our daily bread.** It is God who provides for our needs, Christ alone who satisfies, and the Spirit who fills us with peace. Here is an example:

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Jesus, you alone can satisfy and you alone can fill me with peace in the waiting, during difficult seasons, and even as we anxiously await to celebrate this Christmas. Help me this day, this week, and this season, to know your peace and to depend on you alone. Give me eyes to see the idols I put before you and ways I live independent of you. Give me what I need to live a life like you and help me to remember you always. Remind me that I cannot do this, but you can do this in me. Teach me to submit and depend on you. Fill me with the bread that satisfies. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.***

## LOVE GOD: CONTEMPLATE AND CELEBRATE

This season can be busy, but it can also be experienced through a restful peace within your soul that only Christ can provide. Reflecting on and looking for God's hand moving in your days will help you lean into the peace of the Spirit.

### **THIS WORLD WILL NOT EXPERIENCE PERFECT PEACE UNTIL JESUS RETURNS, BUT IN THE MEANTIME, PEACE IS AVAILABLE TO US THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Take time to consider the differences between the peace people seek in this world and the peace only believers can have through Jesus.

### **CONSIDER WAYS YOU SEEK PEACE IN YOUR LIFE APART FROM GOD. WHAT IDOLS STAND IN THE WAY?**

If you struggle to identify idols in your life, pray and ask God to reveal them to you. Discuss or journal your thoughts with gratitude as you wait on the Lord and celebrate this season.

### **PRAY THIS WEEK FOR THE PEACE OF CHRIST OVER YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, CO-WORKERS, OUR LEADERS, THIS WORLD AND YOURSELF.**

### **CELEBRATE THROUGH WORSHIP**

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## PRAY FOR MISSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

We've been called to love God and our neighbors. **Think of someone you know who is striving for peace apart from God and pray for them. Write them a note or do something special to let them know you are praying for them to have peace through Jesus this season.** Remember, the goal is not to do all the things. The goal is to be open and willing to move as the Spirit leads. Do not fear. He will be with you wherever you go.



# LOVE

Sometime after the Israelites entered *The Promise Land* they desired to be like other countries who had a king. God knew a king would not care for them like He would. After all, he is a righteous and holy God and man is sinful by nature. He warned them what life under a king would be like, but the people still insisted a king was what they needed. So, God let them have what they wanted even though he knew it wasn't good for them.

Saul became the first king of Israel and reigned according to his own will and way, not God's. In time, God appointed another man named David to be King. David was just a young shepherd boy when he was anointed and waited many years before ruling as king over all of Israel. David is known to be a mighty warrior king who was also a man after God's own heart. David loved and adored God. Unlike Saul, David sought God's will above his own. God even made a covenant with David, a descendant of Abraham, to establish his throne forever. This would be fulfilled through Jesus who came to conquer sin and death for us. One day He will reign forever as King over all His people. Toward the end of David's life God allowed him to help his son, Solomon, make preparations to build the temple. Let's read about how God revealed himself to Simeon and Anna who devoted their lives to God and served in the temple. **Read Luke 2:22-32**

**WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THIS PASSAGE?**

**WHO IS SIMEON AND WHAT DID GOD REVEAL TO HIM THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

**WHO DID SIMEON SAY JESUS WAS?**

**WHO IS ANNA AND WHAT DID SHE DO?**

Just like David, Simeon and Anna loved and adored God. The love they had for God created a faithful response in each of their lives. They were by no means perfect, but they were faithful. 1 John 4:16 tells us, "God is love." It is literally who He is! As His children, knowing God is knowing love. It was His love that would eventually lead this eight-day old baby to a cross so that He could be salvation for all who believe in Him. The way to love is through Jesus. In John 14:6 Jesus said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" We too have been called to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Out of that love our natural response will be to share God's love with those around us.

Every person in this world, whether they realize it or not, desires to be loved, to be seen, to be known. We were created to be in union with God, but our sin fills us all with desires to look outside of God for satisfaction. That will never happen. God desires us to see that He is truly what we want and need. God loves us so much He came for us. Resting in love is receiving Christ's love and trusting in Him no matter the circumstances. This is not something that comes naturally for us, it is done through the work of the Spirit. This Christmas season, rest and receive all of God's fulfilled promises done through His love.

## DIG DEEPER

**2 Samuel 7** (The Lord's Covenant with David) Where do you see love in this covenant?

**Mark 12:29-31 & Matt. 22:37-40** (The greatest commandments - Love God, Love people)

**Consider the life of Jesus so far through the Gospel of Mark.** How did He love the people around him?

# A PRAYER OF LOVE



Love created a faithful response in David, Simeon, Anna, and many others in the Bible. Jesus and His love for others is the perfect example of God's love for all. As you grow to love and adore God, He will also lead you to love others as Christ did.

As you pray this week, continue to reflect on who God is as your Holy Father. Pray for His will and provision. Our focus this week is love. The next part of the Lord's prayer reminds us that love forgives... **and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.** Here is an example:

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, I pray your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Thank you, Jesus, for forgiving me of my sin and for covering me with your righteousness. Remind me of your love and sacrifice for me and teach me to love and forgive others as you have. Grow me to be more like you and help me love others like you do. Fill me with compassion and break my hardened heart that often leads to judgment, resentment, and pride toward others, especially when I disagree or feel wronged. Help me to remember you are enough and teach me to receive your love and rest in it. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.***

## LOVE GOD: CONTEMPLATE AND CELEBRATE

Reflecting on and looking for God's hand moving in your days will cause you to become more aware of His love and care for you. It will also lead you to love and care for others.

### ASK THE SPIRIT TO REVEAL WAYS YOU REJECT GOD AND HIS LOVE.

Pray He will help you reflect on and receive His love. Journal or discuss what He reveals to you with gratitude as you wait on the Lord and celebrate this season. This may come in time and may not happen immediately, so allow it to be a part of your regular prayer time with God.

### PRAY: "JESUS GROW ME TO BE LIKE YOU AND LOVE LIKE YOU"

### CELEBRATE THROUGH WORSHIP

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## LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

We've been called to love God and our neighbors. **Ask the Spirit to provide opportunities for you to share the love of Christ with someone. It may be a conversation, a shared meal, a gift you make or bake, a letter you write, or something else.** Remember, the goal is not to do all the things. The goal is to be open and willing to move as the Spirit leads. Do not fear. He will be with you wherever you go.



# GRACE

Merry Christmas! Jesus the Messiah has come, which is why we celebrate today. This celebration is just the beginning of a promise fulfilled by God. There has been a great deal of anticipation for this promise to be fulfilled. We have looked at how the Old Testament shows us the sinful nature of mankind and our need for a Savior. Since the Fall in Genesis 3, death and bloodshed was required to cover sin. These sacrifices were also a way to thank God for His provision. (Genesis 3:21; 4:2-4) During the time of Moses God gave the laws for these sacrifices. He also gave the 10 commandments and priests were put in place to help remind the people of God's law. It is through the law that God shows us our inability to keep the law and our need for Him to save us from our sin. He does this by calling us to repentance. We have also seen God continually extend forgiveness and mercy to his people when they repent and turn to Him.

Throughout the Old Testament God uses chosen people known as prophets to communicate His message. The prophets would often call out sin and encourage the people to repent. They also prophesied about what God said would come in the future. One example is the coming Messiah. There were also false prophets who spoke to the people and told them what they wanted to hear. The true prophets of God often experienced rejection, mocking, beatings, and even death at the hands of the Israelites. Many believed Jesus was a prophet too and wondered if this Jesus was the Messiah, the one Israel has been waiting for. Would the Israelites be able to see and receive Jesus as the Messiah? Had mankind finally been reconciled to God?

Not yet - the Israelites also rejected Jesus, beat Him, mocked Him, and put Him to death on a cross. They had eyes, but could not see, they had ears, but could not hear, and hearts that did not receive even though everything that was told to them in the prophecies were unfolding before them. God was not surprised by this. It was His plan (Isaiah 53:10) all along to come in the flesh as Jesus, to live the life we couldn't, and die as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. Jesus didn't remain in the tomb. He rose on the 3rd day which also shows us God's power over sin and death - a death we deserved and Jesus did not. Let's look at how Jesus revealed himself to a group of women, two men traveling home, and the disciples on the third day after His death. **Read Luke 24:1-35 or God's Wonderful Surprise in The Jesus Storybook Bible**

## WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THIS PASSAGE?

## WHEN DID THE WOMEN, TWO MEN, AND DISCIPLES CLEARLY UNDERSTAND WHO JESUS WAS?

In the Old Testament, a sacrifice to God had to be pure, spotless, and without blemish. Jesus, being born of a virgin and living free of sin, accomplished what was impossible for us because we have never lived without sin. His sacrifice is a gift to humanity and He is the gift of grace that restores us to God. Jesus is the greater Adam, Abraham, Moses, and David. He is the ultimate prophet, priest, and king, who took our place in judgment and freed us from the wrath of God. Colossians 1:13-14 says, *"He delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* Hallelujah! As you give and receive gifts today, rejoice, thank, and praise God for giving the best gift you could ever receive, union with God for eternity!

## DIG DEEPER

**Isaiah 53** (Jesus our mediator would pay for our transgressions)

**Romans 3:21-26** (All have sinned. Jesus, our righteousness, was given as a gift)

**Colossians 1:13-14** (We are delivered from darkness to kingdom/redemption.)

# A PRAYER OF GRACE



All season we have used The Lord's Prayer to guide us as we seek to rest in God's fulfilled promises. We are at the end of our celebration and now more than ever it will be easy to return to our old habits. The last part of this prayer is exactly what we need at this time... **And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** This helps us not forget the gift of grace we have been given in Christ and what we have been delivered from. As you pray this week, continue to reflect on who God is as your Holy Father. Pray for His will and provision and ask Him to help you remember to forgive as He forgave. Here is an example:

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, I pray your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Thank you Jesus, for leaving heaven in your perfection to save me from sin and death. Thank you for being ever present in my life. You know Lord, the things that tempt me to wander from you and cause me to live outside of the light of your grace and mercy. Allow me not to wander long apart from you, and deliver me daily from the evil one who still seeks after me. Help me to know and see your truth alone and grow me to live like you. All praise, honor, and glory to you, my Savior. Thank you for your grace! In Jesus' Holy and precious name, I pray. Amen***

## LOVE GOD: CONTEMPLATE AND CELEBRATE

Reflecting on and looking for God's hand moving in your days will cause you to become more aware of the Spirit's work in your own life. Living from His grace will lead you to extend grace to others.

### ASK THE SPIRIT TO REVEAL TO YOU THE TEMPTATIONS OF YOUR HEART.

Journal or discuss your thoughts with gratitude as you wait on the Lord and celebrate this day. This may come in time and may not happen immediately, so allow it to be a part of your regular prayer time with God.

### CONTEMPLATE THE WORK OF CHRIST. HOW HAVE YOU CLEARLY SEEN GOD'S GRACE IN YOUR LIFE OVER THE PAST WEEK, MONTH, YEAR?

*Journal or discuss your thoughts with gratitude.*

### CELEBRATE THROUGH WORSHIP

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## LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

We've been called to forgive as God forgives. **Ask God to help you extend grace to someone in your life. Pray for someone you know who has not received the gift of grace through Christ and ask the Spirit to help you share biblical grace with them.** Remember, the goal is not to do all the things. The goal is to be open and willing to move as the Spirit leads. Do not fear. He will be with you wherever you go.



# ABIDE

Happy New Year! Christ has come and risen just as God said! We now live in the second advent anticipating Jesus' return to judge and redeem all creation. Before we look at what Jesus says about His second coming, let's take a moment to read from the gospel of John. John was the writer of this gospel and a disciple of Jesus, not to be mistaken with John the Baptist who was Zechariah and Elizabeth's child. He wrote his gospel years after the resurrection of Jesus, reflecting on who Jesus was and His life here on earth. Let's first look at how John described Jesus and how he pointed others to Him. **Read John 1:1-18**

**DISCUSS OR WRITE DOWN ALL THE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WHO JESUS IS AND HIS PURPOSE IN THIS PASSAGE**

**LOOK AT VERSES 6-8, AND 15. WHO IS JOHN?**

**IN VERSE 18, WHO DOES JESUS HELP US KNOW?**

John is also the writer of Revelation. He wrote this book during his time in exile on the island of Patmos, toward the end of his life. Through His angel, God revealed to John the future prophecies about the return of Jesus. The prophecies are about what is to come before Jesus' return and how God will eventually rid the earth of sin forever and redeem all of creation. It is a book that gives us hope about what life with God for eternity will look like and reminds us where our hope shall abide. Let's look at what Jesus reveals to us about His return. **Read Revelation 22, or A Dream Of Heaven in The Jesus Storybook Bible.**

**WHAT TREE GROWS BY THE RIVER?**

**HOW MANY DIFFERENT FRUITS COME FROM THAT TREE? WHAT DO THE LEAVES REPRESENT?**

**WHAT DOES VERSE 3 MEAN?**

Remember all the way back in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There was also another tree called the tree of life. God could not allow Adam and Eve to remain in the garden because mankind would be forever separated from God if they ate from that tree. God knew this and that is why He required Adam and Eve to leave the Garden of Eden. God did not want to remain separated from mankind for eternity. He created us to be in a relationship with Him. This is why Jesus first came to save the world not to condemn it.

Jesus stands as our mediator and our righteousness. He is the one who cancels our sin debt forever. It is through Jesus alone that we are ultimately restored back to God. The next time He returns, He will judge all and then reconcile those who repent and believe in Him, to eternal life. What a glorious day it will be for His children! Let's not forget that we can live today with the hope, joy, peace, love, and grace that comes through the gift of the Spirit. Seek God and ask Him to help you abide in the Spirit so you can live in the rest He provides.

## DIG DEEPER

**John 14, 15, and 16** (Jesus will send help. Abide in Him and He in you and the Spirit will guide)

**Luke 24:50-53** (Jesus' ascension and calling the disciples to wait for power on High)

**Acts 2** (The disciples received Holy Spirit)

**Galatians 5** (Walk in the Spirit, fruits of the Spirit)

# ABIDE IN PRAYER



## ABIDE IN PRAYER

We have learned this Advent season that God opens our understanding and helps us walk in truth. Galatians 5 is a great place to read about how Christ sets us free from the law and how we can walk by the Spirit and not the flesh. It is not possible to walk in the Spirit if you are living your days apart from God. Abiding with God in prayer grows your relationship with Him. What a gift! Pray throughout your day, remaining in continual conversation with Him. He will never get tired of communing with you. Just because you say “Amen” doesn’t mean your conversation is over, it means, LET IT BE SO! Let’s pray...

**...that the Lord would teach us to abide in Him and He in us. (John 15)**

**...that He would increase the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. (Galatians 5:16-26)**

**...that He help us die to ourselves and follow Him. (Luke 9:23)**

**...that as we walk in step with the Spirit, the lives of those around us would also be transformed.**

## ABIDE IN GOD’S WORD

We have God’s word readily available to us. It is a gift that we have His word at our fingertips. Abiding in God’s word on a regular basis will help you continually receive His truth and grow in His understanding.

**Pray that the Spirit will fill you with a desire to read God’s word and help you understand it.**

**The days that we feel like we don’t have time to read God’s word are the days that we need Him the most. Try reading and praying a Psalm or your favorite passage.**

**Write scripture on your heart through scripture memory.**

Consider memorizing **Psalm 37:5** as you head into the new year.

**“Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.” - PS 37:5**

## ABIDE IN COMMUNITY

Abiding in community as a church is another gift God has given us. He left us with one another so we could pray for one another, lift one another up, celebrate with one another, and hold one another accountable.

**Consider asking someone to walk with you for accountability in your walk with the Lord.**

**Pray about someone you could disciple and encourage to abide in The Lord. It doesn’t have to be anything formal. It could be your kids, a family friend, someone at work, a neighbor, etc. This may come in time and may not happen immediately, so allow it to be a part of your regular prayer time with God.**

## ABIDE IN PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, & WORSHIP

Just as we have practiced all season long, continue to look for God each day and this will naturally lead you to praise, thanksgiving, and worship. The Psalms are a great place to express to God what may be stirring within. If it was helpful for you to journal or discuss, continue this practice.

