



Light

— IN THE —

DARKNESS

Daily Devotionals for Advent



A silhouette of a person holding a white cloth against a sunset background with trees.

Hello and welcome to **Light!**

We are so glad to have you on this journey of hope and inspiration this Advent season.

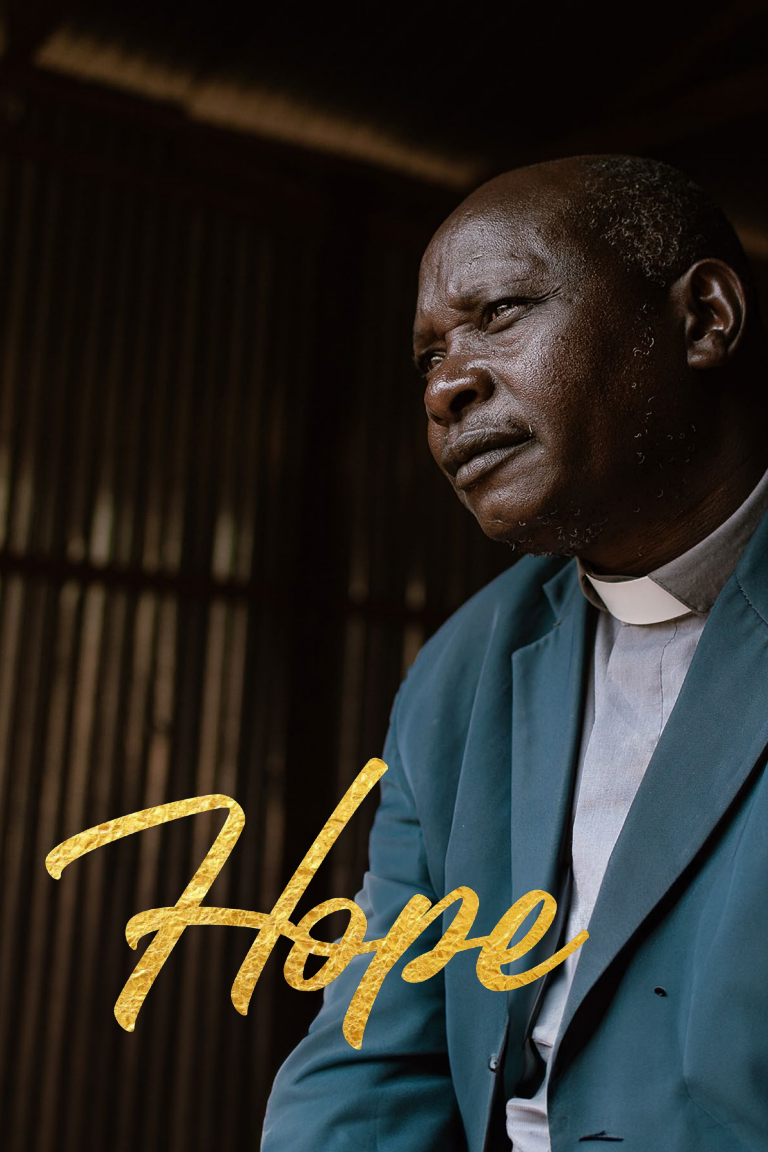
In a world often overshadowed by uncertainty, pain and division, it is our prayer that these short devotionals will help remind you that the light of Christ still shines bright as we approach Christmas.

Advent is a time of patient waiting and hopeful anticipation. Derived from the Latin word *adventus* (which means coming), Advent is a time when we look to not only celebrate Jesus' first coming but also his promise that he will come again. In a world that seems so dark at times, the hope at the heart of Advent reminds us that the light still shines brightly and that the darkness will never win.

Ultimately, Advent is for adoring Jesus. The incarnation of the Son of God is too significant to appreciate in just one day. As we approach Christmas, we hope you will find this little devotional enjoyable, encouraging, and perhaps a bit challenging as we celebrate our Lord.

Many blessings to you this Christmas season.

Matthew Schroeder
Editor, Tearfund Canada



Hope



The End is Known

December 1

Genesis 3:15 – *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*

Shortly after the creation of the world, we are thrown into crisis. Humanity decides that being made in the image of God is not enough. We would rather be God. The result is catastrophic. Sin enters the world and the perfect relationships we had—with God, with each other, with ourselves and with creation—are broken.

Is there any hope?

Here we see a resounding **yes!**

Immediately, we see that God intends to make things right. Often considered the first prophecy of the messiah, this passage foreshadows the coming of Jesus and the sacrifice he will have to make.

God does not leave us to our own fate. Right from the beginning he has a plan for our redemption.

Reflect: Do you often find yourself without hope? Where does this feeling come from? How do you feel knowing that even from the beginning, God had a plan for the world and its redemption?



Pieces of Wood

December 2

Psalm 135:15-17 – The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; they have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear, nor is there any breath in their mouths.

What do you put your hope in?

In Canada, we might find the act of worshipping literal idols made out of wood or stone distant or silly, but the reality is that it is still common practice in many parts of the world where Tearfund works.

Although we may not worship literal figurines, we all have our idols. Whether that is in the money we earn, our education, our connections or possessions.

It's so easy to put our hope in things we can see or touch, isn't it? We want to put our hope in things that we can control. But we know that is what put us in the mess we find ourselves in the first place! Our hope in ourselves instead of Jesus exposes our unbelief.

Christmas offers a different kind of hope. A living hope. One that not only hears and sees us but can sympathize with us.

A hope that changes the world.

Reflect: What do you put your hope in? As we approach Advent, pray that God would redirect your heart towards hope in Jesus rather than hope in the things of this world.



Be Known

December 3

Jeremiah 31:33-34 – For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Who would you say you know the best? For many of us it would be our spouses. Or perhaps a sibling or close friend.

Knowing someone is much more than *knowing about* someone. I can know a lot about a person by researching them. Their favourite food. Height. Facts and figures. But if I had never met them, or talked with them, few would say I actually know them.

It is beautiful that we can actually know God. With the birth of Jesus, the broken relationship between us and the Father was restored. Each of us can walk right into the throne room of God and call upon him like a child, saying, “Abba, Father.”

This Advent, do you know God rather than know about him? Take time to know and be known.

Reflect: How do you approach God? Can you approach him as your loving father? Why or why not?



Hope in a Merciful God

December 4

Lamentations 3:22-24 – The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

At Tearfund, we come across a lot of brokenness across the world. From families living in desperate poverty, to war-torn cities, to floods of Biblical proportions; there just seems to be no end to the calamity. In the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, over 100 rebel factions terrorize families—often stealing, looting, and causing physical harm.

Why does God allow pain and suffering to continue? To us, it seems unjust. We want it to stop. Counterintuitively—amazingly—the reason is mercy.

2 Peter says, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

God wants people to know him. He is patient and waiting. I don’t know about you, but I’m thankful for God’s patient mercy!

Ultimately, we serve a loving God. One that is far more loving than we could ever be. And because of that, we have great hope.

Reflect: In what ways are you thankful for God’s renewing mercies?



Hope has a Name

December 5

Matthew 1:21 – *You will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*

Names have importance. And in ancient times, even more so. The name Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, deriving from Hebrew roots meaning “*The Lord is salvation.*”

Just as Joshua brought Israel into the Promised Land as God had sworn to Abraham, the name Jesus identifies Christ as God’s servant who brings people into their eternal inheritance.

Joshua did bring God’s people into the promise land, but things quickly went sideways. The land was supposed to be a place of rest and where God would bless the nations around them. Instead, Israel quickly forgot their God and they became even worse than their neighbours!

But where Joshua failed, Jesus succeeded.

After waiting and hoping for thousands of years, Israel finally found the one who came who could restore their fortunes. But it was much bigger than what anyone expected. Through Jesus, God went beyond physical borders to bless all nations.

What hope there is in Jesus, the perfect one who comes to save!

Reflect: Do you sometimes limit Jesus’ saving power? Believing there are just some things too big or too deep to turn around? Write down some things you think are impossible. Now pray—ask God to do what only he can do.

An open book lies on a dark wooden surface. In the background, several people are visible, some wearing red and blue clothing, suggesting a church or community gathering. The scene is framed by a thin gold border.

Hope Unleashed

December 6

Luke 4:18-19 – The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

If you were to ask a six or seven-year-old in Sunday school what the fall affected, what do you think they would say? They would likely respond with *everything*.

We serve a big God. So big, in fact, it's impossible to comprehend. But when we think of the gospel, we often take a small view. We acknowledge personal salvation (which is huge, don't get me wrong!). But it is so much more than that.

Just like the fall caused the corruption of all things, the gospel involves the redemption of everything!

In the person of Jesus, we see that God takes this redemption mandate upon himself and that it is holistic.

How big a hope do we have! May your idea of hope become magnified this Christmas season.

Reflect: How big is your hope? Has it unknowingly become small? How can your awe and hope in God become bigger this Christmas season?



Hope for the Nations

December 7

Revelation 5:9-10 – And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood, you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

One of the things I love about living in Canada is the incredible diversity of cuisine. I can get food from any part of the world! From Mexican, to Ethiopian, to Japanese—the options are limitless.

In Revelation, we see a beautiful picture of diversity and are reminded that our hope isn't just the hope of Canada or North America. It isn't a hope just for one ethnicity or country. It is a hope for the entire world!

Here at Tearfund, we work alongside Christian brothers and sisters all over the world daily. Often, they have different and rich perspectives that we don't. And although we come from different worlds, we are united in one thing: to see Christ glorified.

When Christ came down at Christmas many of the Jewish leadership just couldn't imagine that God's messiah would also be interested in gentiles. To them, the messiah would cast off the Romans and restore Israel to its former glory. But God had a different plan—a greater hope.

Reflect: Close your eyes. Imagine yourself in heaven among all the other nations of the world. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? How can you bring the hope of Christmas to all nations this year?



Peace



The Cosmic Wait

December 8

Luke 2:12-14 – “And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is Pleased!”

The contrast couldn't be more stark.

Here we have the messiah, Jesus, come in the most humble circumstances. Born as a helpless baby, in a barn, in a food trough.

Juxtaposed with thousands of angels singing praises to the most high God!

Remarkable.

When Jesus came, Israel had been waiting for their Messiah for hundreds of years. But what's interesting is that they weren't the only ones waiting. Apparently, the heavenly host was waiting too. And they were excited.

The beauty of God is that his plans are so far beyond what we can see or imagine. Israel's leaders thought the Messiah would only come to restore their nation. But God was coming to do much more. He aimed to bring all nations to himself and make his blessings flow as “far as the curse is found.”

Reflect: Do you see God's peace first and foremost for yourself or for all? How can you spread his peace to all those around you?



Don't Miss Out

December 9

Matthew 2:3 – When Herod the King heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

It's important to remember that not everything was peaceful when Jesus was born—least of all Herod. Herod wasn't a stranger to the prophecies of the Old Testament. Having himself reigned so long and so successfully, he probably began to wish they would never be fulfilled! The birth of the Messiah was an affront to his power and authority.

Although we don't often relate to Herod when we read this story (we'd much rather be the Shepherds), we can find ourselves a lot like him. Sometimes, we would rather want our ways instead of God's.

By doing so, we miss out on his peace.

Not only that, often we become a disturber of peace instead of a bringer of blessing. Let us not pass up the opportunity to have true peace. God's peace.

Reflect: Are you missing out on God's peace because you are resisting his will? Pray. Ask God to help you soften your heart this Christmas and find peace "that surpasses all understanding."



Time Well Spent

December 10

Psalm 127:2 – *It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.*

A few years ago, I remember reading a news report about a young man who died working 100 hours a week at a Wall Street Investment bank. It was tragic.

Our culture idolizes the self-made, pull-up-by-the-bootstraps type of story. We often believe that if we just try hard enough, we'll accomplish our deepest goals and desires. We work countless hours and make endless plans to get the "good life." But by doing so, we secretly declare that our efforts will bring us peace instead of Jesus, the Prince of peace.

Jesus shows us another way.

In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us that God is a good father who knows what we need. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33).

You can trust in him and depend on him.

He will give you what you need.

Reflect: Do you feel weary, trying to do it all? What can you give over to God? Come, find rest in your God, knowing we have a good Father who cares for our needs.

A photograph showing a group of four people sitting on the ground under a tree in a field. They appear to be resting or having a meal. The background shows a vast field with some trees and hills in the distance under a cloudy sky.

Real Rest

December 11

Matthew 11:28-30 – Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

What is your picture of a restful day? Is it a day with no tasks planned and no interruptions? A day where you can just relax by the pool? Or is it something else?

Rest in the Bible is a big theme. It means so much more than taking it easy. Rest means wholeness, and completeness—a departure from all anxiety and tension.

It is beautiful to know that we have a God who will lift our burdens. Life says you must do more, be more, and try harder. Jesus says, “Let go - trust me.”

The yoke is an interesting metaphor. It’s to attach a couple of animals - usually oxen - to keep them together as they work, such as plowing a field. When we yoke ourselves to Jesus, and attach ourselves to him, he will direct our path. He will do the heavy lifting.

It amazes me that we have a God who didn’t just come down to save us but wants to walk life with us, day by day. That doesn’t mean life won’t be busy or it won’t get difficult. But yoked to Jesus you will find rest for your soul. Real rest.

Reflect: Are you feeling weary and burdened? Write down all the things that are on your mind. Read Luke 10:38-42. Are you more like Mary or Martha in this story?



Costly Peace

December 12

James 2:16 – ...and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

Peace is often a good sentiment. We all want peace. We wish peace upon others. But peace rarely comes easily. Peace comes at a cost.

If we really want peace, we must offer more than words. If we genuinely value peace, we will work to make it happen. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). I love that. Peacemaker - a maker of peace. Not only is it used here as an adjective, it is also a verb.

In the Congo, this has been displayed in a remarkable way. Hearing that many of the local villagers were being harassed by rebel gangs, some of the local churches gathered together to confront and negotiate with the rebels.

What happened was a miracle—it actually worked! The rebels backed off. Peace was accomplished.

Let us all work towards peace this Advent season.

Reflect: What tangible ways can you facilitate peace in your life and the lives of others? Is there someone in your life right now who needs greater peace? How can you provide this for them?



No expiry

December 13

Isaiah 54:10 – For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Peace can be fragile. Can't it?

One of the places where Tearfund works is South Sudan, a country with a long history of violence. During the South Sudanese Civil War, from 2013 to 2020, there were often promising signs of peace. On three separate occasions, ceasefire agreements were signed, just to be broken months later.

But unlike manmade peace, which is often temporary, God's peace endures. Here we have the promise that even if the mountains depart, or the hills removed, God's peace will not abandon his commitment to peace! God's promise of peace doesn't expire.

When Jesus entered the world this promise found its climax. Called the Prince of Peace, Jesus is God's final answer to an Earth without peace. And one day, he will usher in an era of peace that will never be broken.

Reflect: Think of all the reasons why peace might be broken - personally and globally. How can you be proactive in maintaining peace? How you can be a peacemaker?



Picture Perfect

December 14

*Isaiah 2:2-4 – In the last days
the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established
as the highest of the mountains;
it will be exalted above the hills,
and all nations will stream to it.
Many peoples will come and say,
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths.”
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.*

Shalom. In English, Shalom is often simply translated as peace. But in the original Hebrew, the concept is far more profound, meaning “complete” or “whole.” It recognizes that life is complex and full of moving parts. When something is out of alignment, this is a lack of Shalom. To wish Shalom upon someone is to wish them wholeness.

When Isaiah prophesied that there will come a Prince of Shalom(Peace) one day, it is so much more than just about the absence of conflict or war. It is a new era of wholeness. The broken relationships that sin created between God and humans, humans and each other, and humans and creation will be restored.

In the future, God will be with his people, and we will walk in his paths. He will settle disputes. Swords will be transformed into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks. Things that were broken will be whole.

This Christmas, let us look forward to see the whole, beautiful, picture. Let us look towards Shalom.

Reflect: What is peace to you? Is it all-encompassing? Does it seek more than just a lack of conflict but to make things right? As you enter Christmas, are there any relationships that can use Shalom in your life? How might you achieve that?



Joy

A photograph of two young girls standing in front of a structure covered in yellow plastic tarp. The girl on the left is wearing a green dress and has her hair in a bun. The girl on the right is wearing a yellow patterned top and a grey patterned skirt, with her hair in a ponytail. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The image is framed by a thin gold border.

Sing for Joy

December 15

*Luke 1:46-55 – My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations will call me
blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their
hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.*

Doesn't it feel good to be recognized?

I didn't get too many accolades growing up. But I remember one year at camp when I was 9, I won the "Best Camper" award. It meant so much to me. I still have the placard today.

It's incredible that God notices Mary. Likely a teenager, Mary was from a small town born into a poor family. She wasn't of noble birth. She didn't have great wealth. In fact, by human standards, there is nothing noticeable about her!

But unlike earthly recognition, Mary isn't recognized so much because of who she is, but because of who God is.

Like Mary, we are lowly. Compared to an infinite God, who are we!? As the Psalmist says, "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" (Psalm 8:4).

Mary knows this. And she is overwhelmed. She is filled with great joy knowing that God would even pay attention to her. Not only that, but change the course of history! People who are humble and acknowledge their lowly estate can't help but be overwhelmed by the glory and joy of Jesus.

This Advent, let us have joy in knowing that we are recognized by God.

Reflect: Consider how big God is. Now, write down all how he's noticed and blessed you. Give praise. How may you magnify this Lord today?

A woman wearing a headscarf and a dark jacket is standing in a field of young plants. She is holding a large, round, light-colored pumpkin in her left arm and a stack of banknotes in her right hand. She has a joyful expression on her face.

Joy is Contagious

December 16

Matthew 2:10-11 NASB – *When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*


A few years ago, while visiting one of our projects in Ethiopia, we met a woman who was a grandmother to four orphaned children. After their parents died, she was all they had. She took care of them dutifully and sacrificially. But it was often hard to make ends meet. During times of scarcity, she often skipped meals to give them enough to eat.

Thankfully, this wasn't the end of the story. When we met her, she was ecstatic. Barely able to contain her joy as she told us how the farming training she received resulted in a multitude of crops; more than enough to feed herself and her grandchildren.

But her joy didn't stop there. This woman had gained herself a reputation. With her plenty, she couldn't help but share with others. She was known in the community as a sort of Mother Theresa - sharing her newfound blessings with all the orphans in the village!

Joy is infectious. After seeing the Messiah, the Magi were filled with so much joy they couldn't help but worship and give their most treasured gifts to God. The life of a Christ-follower isn't to hoard up blessings but to share our joy.

Reflect: Are you so filled with joy you can't help but worship and share? If not, why? Pray that God will fill you with unquenchable joy. Write down things in your life that you can share to bring others joy.



Joy in the moment

December 17

Psalm 118:24 – This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

I know a missionary family who lived in Gaza during the second intifada. During this time, thousands of shells were dropped, and the threat of death was an ever-present reality. As they shared their story, I was amazed by their faith in God and their commitment to serving the most vulnerable. But one quote really stuck in my mind: “We would wake up every morning with grateful hearts, knowing that the day wasn’t guaranteed.”

Wow. How often do we fall into the routine of life, taking for granted that any day could be our last?

We often don’t face the same level of danger as artillery and bombs hitting our neighbourhood, but the Bible reminds us that tomorrow isn’t guaranteed.

Each day, each moment, is a gift.

As we look forward to Christmas, let us rejoice in today.

Reflect: Christmas is often a hectic time, filled with preparations, events and a never-ending to-do list. Breathe. Do you find yourself complaining or worrying about all that there is to do? Pray to God that you will find a sense of surpassing joy this season.



God's Delight

December 18

Matthew 10:12-14 – *“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.*”

Much of the Christmas narrative is about how we now have joy because God sent his Son, Jesus, to save us from our sin and bring new life. And rightfully so - this is something to have extreme joy about!

But have you ever considered that God has joy in doing so?

It is incredible to think that the transcending God, the Lord of all creation, delights in your redemption! In Zephaniah, it says, “The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness “ (Zephaniah 3:17).”

Wow. Do you ever feel as if you are distant from God? That you are too broken for his love? Then consider these verses. No matter how far you've gone, God is pursuing you.

Enter into His joy.

Reflect: Have you ever considered that God rejoices in your salvation? How does that change your view of God? Write a few thoughts in your journal or on your phone.

A photograph showing a man and a young boy in a rustic, wooden structure. The man is kneeling and washing clothes in a large tub, while the boy stands beside him, also engaged in the task. Laundry is hanging on a line in the background.

Smelly Feet

December 19

Philippians 2:1-4 – Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others.

What would you do if you knew it was your last day on Earth? If you're like me, you might go out and have an extravagant meal, or perhaps you'd try to connect with as many people as possible... maybe even go skydiving! There are countless options.

The thing is, Jesus knew. Jesus knew when his last day was and how it would happen. And what did he decide to do with these precious hours?

He washed feet.

Dirty, smelly, first-century feet. It wasn't the first time the disciples were perplexed. But by purposefully engaging in this act, Jesus tells us what it really means to be a follower of his: it means to serve.

This isn't lost on the Apostle Paul. Here, he desperately wants the church in Philippi to be like-minded and servant-hearted. So much so that he says it would "make his joy complete."

Do you take joy in serving others—in and outside of the church? Or do you begrudge it?

This Christmas, let us make our joy complete. Let us serve one another like our Lord Jesus did.

Reflect: Who do you know needs serving today? This week? How can you go out of your own way to look after their interests?



Joining in Joy

December 20

John 17:13-15 – “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

It's hard to look at the news today and not feel discouraged. It seems as if things aren't getting better but worse. In times like these, it is common to hear Christians pray that Jesus would come and take us out of this world.

God could have easily taken us out of this world, but he doesn't. It's not his will. Here, we see Jesus praying not that his followers would be removed from the world but remain. Why? Because there is still work to be done.

You have a part to play in God's redemptive work. Our purpose isn't to be removed from society but to transform it. To be agents of love and joy within our homes, workplaces and neighbourhoods. It's a massive task, but thankfully, we don't have to do it alone. Jesus is on our side. Upon leaving, Jesus has gifted us with the Holy Spirit.

This Advent, let us not be of the world but be in the world. Joyfully completing the task at hand, having immense hope in our beautiful Saviour.

Reflect: Do you ever want to leave the world behind? What causes this feeling? Pray. Ask God to give you the full measure of joy to be joyful in the most difficult times - and spread his joy to others.



Romans 5:10-11 – *If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

In his book, *The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis writes:

“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

What brings you joy? Is it the things of this world? Or is it God himself?

The Apostle Paul reminds the church in Rome that the ultimate gift God has given us isn't the stuff we have - it is Himself. God's ultimate gift is a relationship within himself through Jesus. Through Jesus and his sacrifice on the cross, God purchased our reconciliation. Nothing else even comes close. But as Lewis states, we are far too easily pleased.

This Christmas receive the reconciliation that he purchased. Don't put the gift on the shelf unopened.

Reflect: If you were offered infinite joy, would you take it? In what areas of your life have you opted to be too easily pleased? Pray that this Christmas God would help you focus on the ultimate gift, God himself.



Love



Deep Love

December 22

1 Peter 4:8 – *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*

What does it mean to “love each other deeply”?

In this verse, Peter tells Christians to work hard at loving others. It is not something we do passively, rather it is an action we make.

To illustrate this kind of love, Jesus tells the parable of a man left beaten on the side of the road who was passed by the priest and a Levite. It was a Samaritan, an outcast in the area and historically viewed as an enemy by the Jews, who stopped and showed abundant compassion to this man. Loving our enemies is not natural to us! But this kind of radical love is what Jesus teaches.

Jesus calls us to love so earnestly that forgiveness is the natural response. To love so fervently that resentment finds no place to stay. To love so deeply that others see in you the love of Jesus, whose own deep love has covered your sins. It is only through Him that we are able to demonstrate this radical love!

Reflect: What does loving actively and radically look like for you today? Is there someone in your life who is difficult to love deeply? Pray. Ask God to lead you in his love to those around you this Christmas season.



Love like Jesus

December 23

John 15:12 – This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

We sometimes have a habit of making things more complicated than they have to be, don't we? We as humans, love details because they give the illusion of control. Sometimes simplicity seems too easy.

This is one of my favourite chapters in Scripture. And although it is simple, it is massively difficult to do.

Earlier in the chapter, Jesus tells his disciples that if they were to be true disciples, they would have to abide in Christ and in his love. How? By keeping his commands (v10). Which begs the question - what does Jesus command? Thankfully, he tells us.

Have you ever deeply considered what it means to love others as Jesus has loved you? It's impossible! Jesus, the Lord on high, who came down from heaven and gave his life for you so that you would have eternal life. I don't know about you, but there are few people I would give my life for!

This Christmas, let us consider what it truly means to love. To love as Jesus has loved us.

Reflect: Pray. Ask God to teach you more of what it means to love like him. Thank him for his wonderful love for us. Repent of the ways you did not show love to others. Now go, love on others.



Love found me

December 24

*Love, travelling in the greatness of His strength,
Found me alone,
Footsore and tired by the journey's length,
Though I had known
All the long way many a kindly air,
And flowers had blossomed for me everywhere.*

*And yet Love found me needing Him.
He stayed; Love stayed by me.
"Let not your heart be troubled or dismayed,
My child," said He.
Slipped from me then, all troubles, all alarms,
For Love had gathered me into His arms.*

Amy Carmichael (1867 - 1951)



December 25

John 1:14 – And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Did you ever wonder what Mary pondered in her heart? Having just given birth to this new child who now rests in a manger...? After seeing angels and shepherds declare the glory of God...?

There sure was a lot to think about.


The amazing thing about this Jesus is that he is God made man. Fully God and fully human. The glory of God in human form, full of grace and truth.

It is hard to wrap your head around. So Mary ponders (Luke 2:19).

This Christmas, let us take time to ponder this beautiful Jesus we have. The light in the darkness. To remember that he is our gift, full of grace and truth.

Merry Christmas!

Our Vision

 To see people freed from poverty, living transformed lives, and reaching their God-given potential.

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PO Box 3220 Stn Industrial Park, Markham ON, L3R 6G5 Canada
☎ (905) 415-8181 ✉ connect@tearfund.ca 🌐 @tearfundcanada 🐦 /tearfundcanada

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