



Christmas • December 2022

Overview

Christmas is a moment when we remember the greatest and most expensive gift ever given. That Jesus Christ, fully God, laid aside his glory and became human, lived the life we should have lived, and died the death we deserved on our behalf. God's call for us to love others is a reflection of his great love for us. His call to be generous is an overflow of his generosity to others.

We, therefore, want to celebrate and share the message of Christmas using the traditional advent themes of Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy.

Outline

1. Jesus the Hope of the world
2. Jesus the coming Prince of Peace
3. The costly gift. Jesus, God's gift of Love
4. Jesus, the Joy to Heaven and Earth



Week 1 • 27 Nov 2022 • Romans 8:22-27

Jesus coming is hope for all peoples, for all of time

1. Can you think of a time you were excitedly anticipating something and it did not live up to the hype?
What about a time when you were super excited, but the event exceeded your expectations?
2. Read Romans 8:22-27 together slowly.
 - a. What is “this hope” in verse 24?
 - b. What do you think the “wait” (v 23 and 25) is referring to?
 - c. You might like to share practical details or encouragements of how you wait, hope, and ‘groan’.
 - d. How would you explain these truths to a non-believer?
3. We have the great gift of Hope from God. This is radically different from what we are encouraged to place hope in the world. What are ways we can offer hope to our neighbours this week?

4. As a church, we are sharing Christmas devotions to encourage each other. As a group, you might like to plan (and pray for) a way to encourage each other in this season of Advent. Ideas:
 - a. Plan a local event to invite others
 - b. Host a movie or other type of activity to build relationships
 - c. Do an advent devotion series together in the Bible
 - d. Set in place intentional meetings or coffees with people you have meant to see this year but haven't yet.



Week 2 • 4 Dec 2022 • Isaiah 9:1-7

Jesus is God's prophesied plan to reconcile all people to himself

1. What gives you peace? What 'robs' you of peace?

2. Have you ever had a time when you felt peaceful but the circumstances surrounding you should have determined you to feel the opposite? Why was that?

3. Isaiah 9:1-7 is one of the great prophecies of Jesus coming
 - a. Which picture in the passage sticks out most vividly for you?

 - b. What do you notice about peace in this passage?

 - c. What do you learn about Jesus from this passage?

4. What else do you learn about peace from the following passages?
 - a. John 14:27
 - b. Philippians 4:4-7
 - c. Romans 5:1-2

5. What differences are there when you hear peace talked about in the wider world?

6. What areas in your life are you lacking peace? What can you do to experience God's peace in those areas today?

7. Peace is a gift from God. Pray for the Prince of Peace to fill you and enable you to bring peace to others this week.



Week 3 • 11 Dec 2022 • Passage

1. Most of you will have heard of Gary Chapman's book, "The Five Love Languages".
 - a. Do you know what your top love language is? (Words of Affirmation, Gifts, Quality Time, Acts of Service, Physical Touch).
 - b. Is there a time when someone tried to show you love, or you tried to show love, but they/you were "speaking" the wrong language?
2. 1 John 4:9-10 has a remarkable explanation of what love really is.
 - a. Which single word stands out to you the most in these verses? Why?

- b. Why do you think John says that true love doesn't begin with us, but begins with God? (Hint: look at 1 John 4:19)
 - c. How do the following passages reinforce what John is writing here?
 - i. 1 John 3:16
 - ii. John 3:16
 - iii. John 15:13
3. How does God's view of love contrast a popular slogan in the post-Christian secular West: "Love is love"?
4. If you were the only person alive on the planet, Jesus still would have come and died for you - he loves you that much.
 - a. How does that make you feel?
 - b. How do you want to live your life in response to such radical, sacrificial love from your heavenly Father?
5. Take some time to pray for each member of your group (whether as a whole group, or in smaller groups of 3-4). Listen to the Holy Spirit and speak love and life over each other; pray that each person would know, truly know, how loved they are by God, and to live their lives in response to that great love.



Week 4 • 18 Dec 2022 • Matthew 2:1-12

We wrap up our Great Gift series by talking about JOY!

1. Start with a little game (you might want some prizes ready!). What's the difference between the following words? (LG leaders - you'll want to prepare in advance):
 - a. Dialogue and diatribe
 - b. Enquiry and inquiry
 - c. Recalcitrant and calcify
 - d. Effect and affect
 - e. Happiness and joy (allow everyone to share what they think the difference is here)

2. In Matthew 2:10 we see the magi (wise men) are full of joy when they see the star stop over the place where Jesus is born.
 - a. Why do you think they were full of joy even before they laid eyes on Jesus?

- b. What can we tell about the nature of joy from this passage, as well as the following:
 - i. Hebrews 12:2
 - ii. John 16:20,22
 - iii. Romans 15:13
 - iv. James 1:2
3. Who remembers Pharrell's hit song called *Happy*, released in 2013? It's a banger for sure, and Pharrell wrote it to remind people to be happy in the face of bad circumstances.
 - a. What other messages do you hear from our culture about being happy or joyful in life? What does the world encourage you to put your joy in?
 - b. How do these sources of joy compare with the person and finished work of Jesus Christ?
4. The joy God gives is constant, no matter what is going on in our lives. It isn't putting on a brave face, or even feeling happy when bad things happen - it's a rest, an unshakeable confidence in who Jesus is, what he's done, and what he has promised.
 - a. What often can rob you of joy in your life?
 - b. How can you experience more of God's joy in your life, no matter the circumstances?
5. Pick the most joy-filled worship song(s) you can and play it loud for your group - then rejoice and give thanks, glorify God, rejoice in who he is and what he has done. Finish your Life Group in 2022 with worship, gratitude and joy!