

Advent 2017

This year our advent reflections may not seem as 'Christmassy' as usual. That's because we're looking less at the Christmas stories and more at the deeper meaning.

Week 1 - Becoming Human

The theme for this series is 'Becoming Human'. God came to the earth as a person. Jesus, God the Son, took on human form. He accepted the limitations of being human and showed us what a human being is meant to be.

Each Bible passage this week challenges us to ask:

“What does it mean for God to become human and for us to become the humans that God calls us to be?”

Sunday 3rd December

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and lived among us. *John 1:1,14*

Monday 4th December

...as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God...
John 1:12

Tuesday 5th December

...but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. *Philippians 2:7*

Wednesday 6th December - Day of Prayer & Fasting :: Prayer Meeting 7-8pm

Then God said “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them have rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” *Genesis 1:26*

Thursday 7th December

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. *Ephesians 2:10*

Friday 8th December

...because of His glory and excellence, He has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share His divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. *2 Peter 1:4*

Saturday 9th December

Jesus said “I am the light of the world.” John 8:12
Jesus said “You are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14

Week 2 - Reality

Christmas can be our most materialistic time of the year; a time when material things matter most to us; a time where spiritual matters are pushed out; a time when our culture tries to replace the reality of Jesus with traditions that have nothing to do with Him. The idea of Santa Claus is completely different to the original story of Saint Nicholas. The idea of 'baby Jesus' is very different to who Jesus is now.

Each Bible passage this week challenges us to ask:

“What is real?”

Sunday 10th December

For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. *Romans 8:19-22*

Monday 11th December

...we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. *2 Corinthians 4:18*

Tuesday 12th December

...we walk by faith, not by sight. *2 Corinthians 5:7*

Wednesday 13th December - Life Groups in Bradeley & Hartshill tonight

Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. *Romans 12:2*

Thursday 14th December - Life Groups in Hanley & Newcastle today

...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. *Romans 8:37*

Friday 15th December

"Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" Then Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes and let him see!" The Lord opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire. *2 Kings 6:16-17*

Saturday 16th December

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. *Ephesians 1:3-4*

Week 3 - God with us

One of the most important messages of Christmas is “She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means God is with us.” (Matthew 1:23)

Each Bible passage this week challenges us to ask

“What does it mean that God is with us?”

Sunday 17th December - United Christmas Celebration - Carols & Children’s Nativity

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:6*

Monday 18th December

The eternal God is your refuge, and His everlasting arms are under you.

Deuteronomy 33:27

Tuesday 19th December

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age. *Matthew 28:18-20*

Wednesday 20th December

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? *Romans 8:35*

Thursday 21st December

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. *Isaiah 43:2*

Friday 22nd December

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17

Saturday 23rd December

If God is for us, who can be against us? *Romans 8:31*

Week 4 - Food

The theme for this week is food. It will make a lot more sense after you've heard the talk on Sunday (honest!).

The Bible passages this week challenge us to ask
"How is Jesus food for me?"

Sunday 24th December - United Family Service 10.30am-12

The Lord says, "All you who are thirsty, come and drink. Those of you who do not have money, come, buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend your money on something that is not real food? Why work for something that doesn't really satisfy you? Listen closely to me, and you will eat what is good; your soul will enjoy the rich food that satisfies. *Isaiah 55:1-2*

Monday 25th December - Christmas Day Service 10.30-11.30am

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world. *John 6:5*

There are no midweek meetings this week.

Sunday 31st December - United Service 10.30am

Monday 1st January - Walk at Rudyard Lake 10.30am

**Wednesday 3rd January - Day of Prayer & Fasting
Prayer Drop-in 6-8am :: Prayer Meeting 7-8pm**