

# ARRIVAL

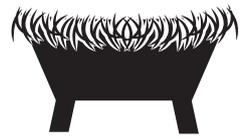


FAMILY ADVENT  
DEVOTIONAL

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# WEEK 1

# ANTICIPATION



Read Isaiah 9:6

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Every year, I patiently wait for the Christmas season. It seems to be my favorite time of the year for many reasons. The lights, the weather, the time with family.....there are so many good things I wait in anticipation for throughout the year for Christmas. It is a wonderful time!

As we enter this Christmas season we jump into a time in the church’s calendar called Advent. The word Advent basically means the arrival or coming of a person. In this case, Christians are anticipating the arrival of Jesus. This reading from Isaiah 9:6 was a prophecy made hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Through Isaiah, God showed His people what to expect when His Son would one day break through to our world. This expectation is a big part of what Christmas is all about. Thousands and thousands of people were waiting for this Savior to be born, for someone to come and save them. God promised them a Savior to come but they didn’t know when He would arrive or how he would look. You can imagine for years people were wondering and waiting for the Savior to arrive. And honestly, some were also wondering if it was ever going to happen. But the good news that we know today is that Jesus came to Earth as a little baby..... to bring us hope and to ultimately save us.

This Christmas season, I want us all to think about the feeling of anticipating something. Maybe you are anticipating opening up gifts on Christmas. Maybe you are anticipating seeing family. Maybe you are anticipating some rest after a long year. Whatever it is....reflect on that feeling with the anticipation of our Savior arriving on Earth as a baby. Imagine the people of God rejoicing when it was made clear to them that the Savior had finally arrived. Sometimes it can be hard to wait on God’s promises...sometimes they take a while or they don’t look like what we originally thought they would.....but God is a promise keeper. God will deliver. He promised His people that He would save them and He did through His son, Jesus.

## Family Questions

- What is your favorite part about Christmas time that you are anticipating?
- Why is it hard to wait on God’s promises sometimes?
- How can we get ready for the arrival of Jesus this Christmas season?

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# WEEK 2

# TRUST



Read Matthew 1:18-25

“When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”

Think of a time when someone told you something you didn't believe. They swore it was true. But for whatever reason, you couldn't bring yourself to believe them. Maybe you were on the other end. Have you ever tried to convince someone of something only to be told you weren't telling the truth?

Think about Joseph and Mary. Joseph and Mary were to be married, but Mary “was found to be with child.” Now, Matthew lets us know that it was the Holy Spirit's work. But, look at Joseph's response: He was going to break off the marriage. Joseph couldn't believe what was going on...

Mary told Joseph about the angel and the news the angel delivered to her, but Joseph didn't seem willing to believe her. Matthew tells us Joseph was a good man. But who could have blamed him for wanting out of the marriage? Imagine if your fiancé told you she was pregnant with God's baby. Would you be quick to believe her? This was a hard situation for Mary and Joseph.

Thankfully, God wasn't done with Joseph. God sent an angel to tell Joseph that Mary was telling the truth. The coolest thing about Joseph? His willingness to trust God would make it all work out. Joseph heard the angel's message and essentially said, OK. I'm in. I don't understand it all but I want to.....and I'm going to trust God.

As Christ followers, we're called to have the same trust in God. We might not always understand where God is leading us. But like Joseph, we can trust that God is in control. He knows where He's taking us. And that's all that matters.

### **Family Questions:**

- Have you ever had a time where you tried to convince someone something was true but they didn't believe you? Or vice versa?
- Why can it be hard to trust God's plan sometimes?
- Is there something you are having trouble with trusting God with in this season of your life?
- How can we remind ourselves to trust God in hard times going forward?

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# WEEK 3

# HOPE



Read Luke 2:10-11

But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord’

Hope is a word used a lot around Christmas time.

“I hope to see family from out of town.”

“I hope this year will be less busy than last year.”

“I hope I get everything I asked Santa for!”

Sometimes during the Christmas season, hope can be really hard to come by. It can be a lonely season, a busy season, etc. We can lose hope easily during Christmas because life can be hard.

Christmas, at its core, is a season of hope. It’s a time where we celebrate the coming of Christ into the world. Through the darkest of situations, in one of the most difficult of times, God brought this LIGHT into the world. We know that hope exists because Christ was born. For years, people were looking for hope through a Savior, people were looking for God to save them. And now, every year, we get to be reminded that God provided this hope for His people through a baby.

Jesus came in the flesh as a little baby that first Christmas so that he could ultimately bear our punishment at the Cross and then conquer death by rising from the dead. Sin is in our world sadly but Jesus will ultimately do away with it. Someday we can dwell with Him eternally in a place where God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, no crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4). Loneliness, depression, sin, etc. will be done away with forever. What a blessed hope for us to eagerly look forward to! Thankfully even in a broken world we can put our trust in God. We can put our hope in the Christmas story that God loved us so much He came down to be with us and save us! Darkness stands no chance against the Light of the world. Hope is alive and hope is here to stay!

## Family Questions:

-What are you hoping for during this Christmas season?

-When is it hard to have hope in life? When is it easy to have hope?

-How can you share hope with others who seem hopeless?

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# WEEK 4

# THE ANCHOR



Read Hebrews 2:1

“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”

As we start to close this Advent season it seems like every year we wait for the Christmas season to come and then it is gone so quickly. With all the family gatherings, the parties, church events, etc. It comes and goes so quickly. It seems like just yesterday we put up all the lights and now we are debating whether to take them down or leave them up till January.

As the day of Christmas passes the final devotion to you is to not let Christmas go away in our hearts. Yes, the 25th is gone but the spirit of Christmas is here to stay if we let it. If we will let Christmas truly speak to our hearts, it has great power.

What does Christmas speak to you every year? Stress? Rest? Family? Gifts? Church?

I think Christmas is an anchor day. It's a season that is packed with meaning and significance. In the same way that a boat can't move on from an anchored position, I don't think we can move on from what we think about Christmas. What tone does Christmas set for your year? Really ask yourself that question. Are you reminded of how God loves you enough to come near or are you distracted? Does that distraction carry into January and throughout the year?

What the writer in Hebrews is concerned about is that we will not pay attention and simply drift from the truth in our lives. That's something to think about. Our natural motion is not to move in the direction of God, we are humans who are flawed. If we do nothing, we don't stay put. We drift. We move away from the truth, away from the relationship and away from Christ.

Just like how it is when you go to the beach. If you swim in the ocean and don't constantly look back to the shore to find where your beach umbrella or tent is....you'll start to drift really far away from where you need to be.

When we just float through Christmas, we miss the opportunity to drop an anchor for the year. We fail to bury in our hearts the simple truth that Jesus really loves us. The idea that Jesus loves you will change your life. What if Christmas became an opportunity to sink that like an anchor into our year? What if the truth of Christmas impacted your spring, summer and fall?

This season celebrate. Give and get. Cook and eat. But don't drift through the holiday without reminding your heart of its importance. Christmas holds a truth that can sink deep in December and change the way you speak, live, and react the rest of the year. Jesus really does love you. He has proved it at Christmas, Easter and every day in between. Drop the anchor, stay put in this truth and pay close attention that God loves us enough to come to Earth as a small child. Because of His arrival, we are changed.

### Family Questions:

- What have you learned about God this Christmas season?
- What does it mean to you that God really loves you? Does it change your life?
- How will you use Christmas as an anchor to set the tone for your year and not just for a season?



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CHRISTMAS 2023