



LIGHT

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in a land of deep darkness a light has
dawned.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:2,6





Look around you right now.
Where do you see light?

Is it coming from a lamp beside you or from the sun, streaming rays through a nearby window?
What is the light allowing you see and do right now?
What would be different if it were not there?

Darkness is the opposite of light.
It prevents us from being able to see - both literally and figuratively.

In Isaiah Chapter 9, the people of Israel are told that a season of darkness is coming, as Isaiah warned them that they would be invaded by the Assyrians. Yet, even in the darkness, God sent a promise of hope to His people.

Isaiah 9:2 tells us, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in a land of deep darkness a light has dawned."

The light would be the birth of a child - a wonderful counselor, a prince of peace.
A light that would lead them out of the darkness.
God was asking His people to believe in a future promise and to trust Him more than what their eyes could see.

700 years later, Jesus was born and in John 8:12, he tells us,
"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The birth of Jesus is a beautiful reminder that God keeps his promises.

For Further Study and Encouragement: Read 1 John 1:5-7

Question for Reflection: Where do long for the light of Christ in your life today?





PEACE

"She will give birth to a Son;
and you shall name Him Jesus,
for He will save His people from their sins."

Now all this took place so that what was spoken by
the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled:

"Behold, the virgin will conceive and
give birth to a Son,
and they shall name Him Immanuel," which
translated means, "God with us."

Matthew 1:21-23





How do you feel when life does not go according to your plans?
How do you respond when an unexpected challenge comes knocking at your door?
It can truly be difficult to see circumstances unfold in a way
that was not what you had expected.

The Christmas story begins with a set of circumstances that are quite unexpected
for young Mary and Joseph.

In Mark 1 and Luke 1, we read about a young couple learning that their future together
would be quite different than the one they most likely had imagined.

In Mark 1:21, an angel visits Joseph to share the news that
Mary would give birth to a son, Jesus.

Unexpected? Yes!
Seemingly impossible? Absolutely.

Yet, Mary and Joseph chose to trust that God had the power to do what He had promised.
Mary's response to the impossible in Luke 1,
"I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. May your word to me be fulfilled."

In the midst of unforeseen circumstances, Mary found peace in
the character and promises of the God she loved and served.

The baby born in the manger came as a messenger of peace.
Peace between man and God made possible through the life of this Prince of Peace.

Today the presence of Jesus brings peace to those who trust in Him.
Peace with God. Peace for eternity. Peace as we walk on this journey back home with him.

For Further Study and Encouragement: Read Romans 5:1-2

Question for Reflection: In what area of your life do you long for Jesus to bring peace?





JOY

"But the angel said to them,
"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news
that will cause great joy for all the people.

Today in the town of David a Savior
has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign to you:
You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with
the angel, praising God and saying,
"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:10-14





When was the last time you received some good news? How did it feel?
Did you share it with someone special or keep it to yourself?

Good news is hard to contain; great news is meant to be shared.

When the King of Kings was born that night in Bethlehem and who was first to receive the good news?
The shepherds tending their flock. Ordinary men, alone on a hillside, were the first to taste the joy
found in the Savior of the world.

Good news for all people?
That is a bold claim.
That is a cause for true joy.

Jesus' birth was good news when it was announced to the shepherds that night
and it is good news for us today.

These verses from Luke remind us of 3 important truths:

Jesus' presence produces a joyful response from those who know him.
Jesus' presence is good news that is offered to all who would receive him.
Jesus' presence brings joy because in Him we have all that we need.

"Why did the angels sing?
The angels sang because the everlasting Father had come to extend arms of redeeming grace
to all who would give their hearts to Him." - Paul Tripp, O Come Let Us Adore Him

For Further Study and Encouragement: 1 Peter 1:8-9





LOVE

"This is how God showed his love among us:
He sent his one and only Son into the world
that we might live through him.

This is love: not that we loved God,
but that he loved us
and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for
our sins."

1 John 4:9-10





Birthday gifts, cooking someone's favorite food,
sending a quick text to check in ...
These are all ways we show those around us that we love them.

Love is often thought of as an emotion, but it can also be a verb.
Love for someone or something should produce action on our part
for the benefit of the one we love.

The Christmas story is a love story;
a story of God demonstrating his love for you and me.

The baby in the manger
would grow up to experience the full range of emotions,
sufferings and temptations that we face daily.

What prompted Jesus to leave heaven and come to live among his people?
Love.

Jesus came that we might live - abundantly in fellowship with him now
and eternally with him in Heaven one day.
This abundant, eternal life was made possible by Jesus being our substitute
and paying the price for our sins.

Paul Tripp writes, "The baby in the manger came as our ultimate substitute.
Everything he would do, he would do on our behalf, for our salvation."

What will our response to this love be?

For further study and encouragement: 1 John 4:18

Question for reflection: How have you experienced Jesus' love for you this week?





HOPE

Let us hold unswervingly to the
hope we profess,
for he who promised is faithful."

-Hebrews 10:23





Every day, we use the word “hope” in a variety of ways. We say things like,

I hope you’re doing well or
I hope I get that new job.

Hope is defined as a feeling of expectation or a desire for a certain outcome.

Hope is always attached to something or someone.

Whether we realize it or not, we’re always searching for hope.

The birth of Christ was a moment of hope; the beginning of
God's rescue plan to bring us back to him.

Jesus came to heal and restore hearts and lives that were broken by sin.

Year later, in John 14:6, Jesus reminded his followers that true hope is found in him alone.

In John 14:6, Jesus tells them,

“ I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Jesus is the way back to God.

Jesus is the truth about who God is.

Jesus’ life, in exchange for ours, leads to eternal life.

“The Way, the Truth, and the Life was in the manger,
causing angels to rejoice, Mary to wonder, shepherds to worship, and us to have hope!

The Advent story is a hope story because it chronicles the coming to earth
of the One who is hope, Jesus.”

- Paul Tripp, O Come Let Us Adore Him.

For further study: 1 Peter 1:3-5

Question for reflection: We can have hope because Jesus is faithful.

What are some other characteristics of Jesus that provide you with hope today?

