



## WEEKLY STUDY

# CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas! I ran across this quote from author Pete Greig from his book *Dirty Glory*:

“This is the staggering message of Christ’s incarnation: God’s glory became dirt so that we—the scum of the earth—might become the very glory of God.”\*

Maybe it sounds harsh to say that we are “the scum of the earth” (after all we were created in the image of God), but it is true that God came to the lowliest places and the lowliest people to redeem it all. And we are pretty messy people. At Christmas we have evidence of God’s desire for us to fully see His glory because His Son put it on and displayed it on earth. May you see evidence of God’s glory throughout this week and throughout the year to come.

Christmas Peace,  
Dr. Mark Youngman  
Pastor of Discipleship

\*Pete Greig, *Dirty Glory: Go Where Your Best Prayers Take You* (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2016), p. 3.

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt. Pray this or another prayer as you move into your day.

God,  
*I believe that you have come to earth to save me.  
You stooped all the way down to my level so that I could behold Your glory.  
Of all the gifts I have received in my lifetime, Jesus is the only one I need.  
Thank you God for the gift of salvation.  
Amen.*

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## DAILY STUDY

### MONDAY: JOHN 1.14

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

- For most of you the glow of Christmas is still lingering around the house. Sure, a bit of sadness may have set in. Sadness that the big day is over. Sadness over the ones who were missing this Christmas. But it is typically sadness that comes out of an awareness of how good things have been. For followers of Jesus, all of this goodness is held in the context of these words from the Gospel of John. The Word made his dwelling among us! **Did you see the glory of the one and only Son yesterday? What did it look like?**
- *Lord, thank you for this gift that changed the world. Because of it, I can behold your glory! Amen.*

### TUESDAY: EXODUS 33.18-23

*Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."*

<sup>19</sup> *And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."* <sup>20</sup> *But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."*

<sup>21</sup> *Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock."* <sup>22</sup> *When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.* <sup>23</sup> *Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."*

- Moses was learning that leading the people of God was not easy. They were going astray and the journey ahead towards the promised land seemed pretty daunting. So Moses said, "Don't send us there unless you are going to go with us!" God (who had parted the Red Sea, made bread appear on the ground each morning, walked with them as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night) promised to remain with him and to make a way for the people to live in the blessing he had for them. He saw a glimpse or a sliver of the glory of God. Still, even after this encounter no one had seen the fullness of the glory of God. **Have you ever wondered if God's glory was being hidden from you?**
- *God of deliverance, we live in some hard times. There have been moments when your glory seemed to be hidden from me. I also recognize that there was a time when no one had yet seen your glory revealed to them. Thank you for the gift of your presence. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY: 2 CHRONICLES 7.1-3

*When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.<sup>2</sup> The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it.<sup>3</sup> When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying,*

*"He is good;*

*his love endures forever."*

- The glory of God was in and above the temple, but no one could behold it. The priests couldn't go into the place where the glory of God was because it was full of glory. The people who saw fire coming down knew that the glory of the Lord was above the temple. In response, they stuck their faces on the ground and worshiped. They could not fully behold it! Like Moses, they got a taste, a glimpse, a glimpse of glory. And it caused them to worship God for God's steadfast covenantal love. **When was the last time you were overwhelmed by the presence and goodness of God?**
- *God of heaven, how amazing it is that you would show up to a young girl in Bethlehem, while throughout generations religious professionals had been unable to behold your glory! I long to sit in that place with Mary! Amen.*

#### **THURSDAY: JOHN 1.16-18**

*Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*

- There was grace given to God's people through the law of Moses. And now there is grace on top of that grace through Jesus Christ. Grace upon grace is what we can now receive! And in him we can see the fullness of God. **What does it say about God that He can choose to give more out of his abundance?**
- *God, your love for me is limitless. May I live as one who has received your grace upon the grace already given. Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 3.18 (NLT)**

*So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*

- Paul wrote about a veil that was removed. The temple mentioned in Wednesday's passage contained a veil that kept people from the place where the glory of God visited. The veil was symbolically ripped upon Jesus' death on the cross (Matthew 27.51), and the separation between God's people and God's glory was actually removed. And we are being changed into the image of Jesus Christ. **Can you identify moments when others recognized the image of Christ in you? When have you seen it in others who are following Jesus?**
- *Jesus Christ, you are the Son of God, the image of the invisible God. May I soak in your glory and become more and more like you. Amen.*

#### **SATURDAY: PSALM 115.1-7**

*Not to us, Lord, not to us  
but to your name be the glory,  
because of your love and faithfulness.*

<sup>2</sup> *Why do the nations say,  
"Where is their God?"*

<sup>3</sup> *Our God is in heaven;  
he does whatever pleases him.*

<sup>4</sup> *But their idols are silver and gold,  
made by human hands.*

<sup>5</sup> *They have mouths, but cannot speak,  
eyes, but cannot see.*

<sup>6</sup> *They have ears, but cannot hear,  
noses, but cannot smell.*

<sup>7</sup> *They have hands, but cannot feel,  
feet, but cannot walk,  
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.*

- This Psalm communicates one of the core theological (how we talk about God) teachings of Judeo-Christian faith. God is God and I am not. The focus in Psalm 115 is on God. We seek God's glory and not our own. This is the God who sent his Son at Christmas so that we could know him and have life through him. Through Jesus, we know that God can speak and hear. He was willing to walk around with us and feel what we feel so that he could redeem it all! **Have you ever noticed yourself or someone else trying to make God fit into something they can manage? How freeing it can be to let God be God and to seek his glory!**
- *God, in this week after Christmas Day, keep my heart focused on your glory and not my own. Amen.*

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

In Sunday's message, Pastor Mark said:

*"Look around you right now on this Christmas morning...I hope you are surrounded by beautiful signs of life...take a moment to take it in...Now, as you look up at the larger world, you are sure to see a lot of brokenness too—you might feel like Moses as you look at the difficulties that seem to stand in the way between here (where we are) and the Promised land (where we are going). You may want to say SHOW ME YOUR GLORY!"*

*Remember, this is the same world that God has brought all of his glory into...behold! And this is the world that Jesus will return to in all of his glory. He won't pass us by, and we will behold the fullness of God."*

- As you look towards a new year, take a moment to look back at 2022. What were some of the signs of brokenness? What were some of the signs of hope?

Signs of Brokenness in 2022

Signs of Hope in 2022

- How could each of these signs of brokenness be different in the coming days, weeks, and months if only we could behold the glory of God?