



WEEKLY STUDY

Come and Adore - Week Four

We are in the final week of Advent (Latin for *arrival*). It's a season of 4 weeks that marks our waiting for the arrival of Jesus. Soon all of our attention will be on the manger and the celebration of Emmanuel— God with us. But first, we'll take a moment to follow the role that Joseph played in the Christmas story. May you and yours mark experiences of God's revelation with obedience to the calling of His Son this Christmas!

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for those who are experiencing darkness in the world. Pray that they might see the glimmer of hope that exists in the light of Christ.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: MATTHEW 1.18-25 (NIV)

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Because Joseph her

husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[1] because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

- Joseph was well-versed in the culture of his time. He knew that his options were limited when it came to handling the pregnancy of his soon-to-be wife. He considered letting her off the hook and quietly parting ways. The only alternative he would have seen was to have her publicly shamed and possibly even killed. And then God showed him another way. It was a way that was only possible with God. Only possible if her pregnancy truly was from the Holy Spirit. Have you ever faced a time when you had to go against the grain of society in order to follow God’s plan?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! (Acts 5.29)**
- *God, thank you for so often making a way where there seems to be no way. Ultimately, thank you for intervening in this world of darkness to bring the light of hope and salvation to us in Jesus! Amen.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 1.57-66 (NKJV)

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.”

⁶¹ They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.”

⁶² Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

- The naming of a male child was a moment of legacy. It was a sign that the story of the family would continue on. This would have been especially important to an older couple who had most likely given up on the family line continuing through them. But God's plan was for an even bigger legacy. This child was meant to prepare the way for the Messiah. In what ways is your spiritual legacy bigger than your familial legacy?
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- **Prayer Prompt: And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ (Philippians 1.9-10)**
- *God, you are continuing to build a spiritual legacy through me. Give me perspective to see the larger impact you might be making through someone like me. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 1. 67-79 (NIV)

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸ "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.
⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),
⁷¹ salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—
⁷² to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear
⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

- When was the last time you saw the sun rise in the morning? When you have time, you can see all of the amazing, slow steps of the arrival of the day. There is something majestic and peaceful about it all. The arrival of Jesus was like this. A whole new day was dawning, and yet, to make way for it, a seemingly random old man sang God’s praises for the arrival of his own son who would announce the arrival of God’s Son. It’s a lot to take in. When was the last time you felt awe about the big plans of God?
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- **Prayer Prompt: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.**
⁹ **“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55.8-9)**
- *Almighty and everlasting God, I confess that I can get caught up in my plans and not consider that you are working a much larger plan. Give me pause today to see the places where you are breaking through. Amen.*

THURSDAY: JOHN 1.1-5 (NKJV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

- Merry Christmas! As you read these words from the Gospel of John today, take a moment to picture the scene of Jesus’ birth. A baby. A manger. Young parents. A world desperate for a Savior. May this day give you many signs of the light shining in the darkness. What places of darkness might be overcome by the light of Christ today?
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- **Prayer Prompt: When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8.12)**
 - *Lord God, thank you for the gift of You. You came down to earth to save us—to save me. Thank you for breaking through the darkness to find me. Amen.*

FRIDAY: PHILIPPIANS 2.3-4 (NIV)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

- We started this week with the story of Joseph. He had a moment of consideration. He had to decide what to do about Mary. His first response showed humility and integrity. Is there a decision that you are facing today that feels big? What are your options? What are all of the possible outcomes that you see? Is it possible that God might have a different way for you to go? Give the situation to him and listen...
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- **Prayer Prompt: Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3.5-6)**
- *God, I want every decision I make to be based on your best desire for my life. I won't be perfect, but I long for your way to reign today. Amen.*

SATURDAY: 1 JOHN 5.3-4 (NIV)

this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ⁴for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

- Joseph also had a moment of obedience that set the course for our celebration of the Incarnation (God putting on flesh for us). We don't typically think that our faithfulness or lack of faithfulness has much of an impact on anyone other than ourselves. But Joseph's actions were among those that overcame the world. There were probably many tough days ahead and many difficult conversations, but for Joseph and Mary, the obedience to God made way for a victory they couldn't even imagine. Write your response to the words, "his commands are not burdensome".
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- **Prayer Prompt: Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11.29-30)**
- *God, I long to be obedient to every word you speak to me. I want to walk in your way. Keep me focused on the ultimate victory that I enjoy in your Son. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

In this week's message, we heard about Joseph's three moments.

1. The moment of consideration. What decisions are you considering right now? What are the options? What are the possible outcomes? Where is God leading you?
2. The moment of revelation. When has God seemed to show up and change the course of your life?
3. The moment of obedience. Is there something you need to do (or not do) that you are sure is a direction from God?