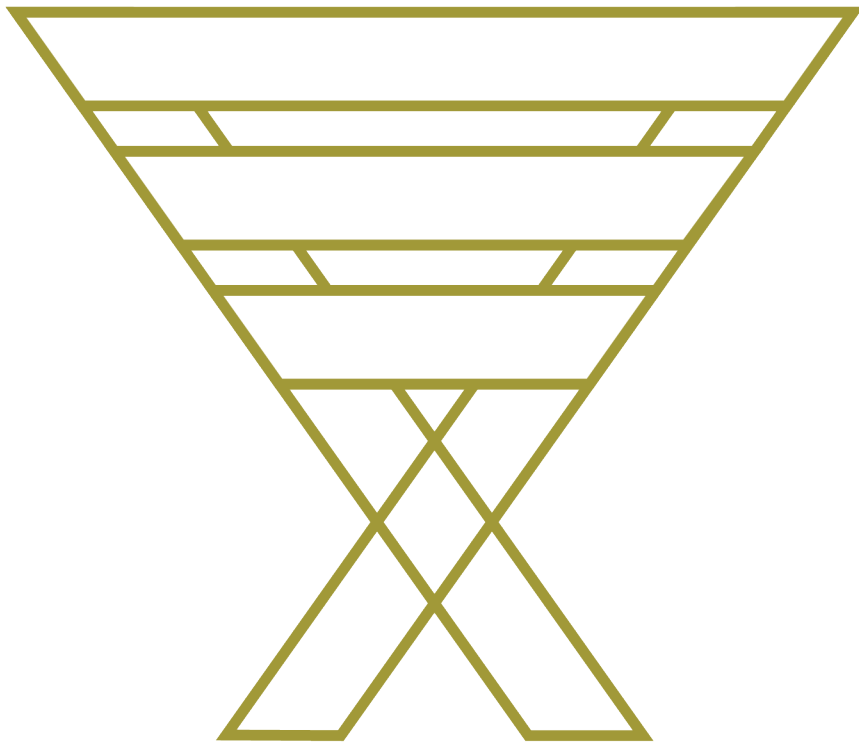


JESUS

PROMISES FULFILLED



ADVENT 2021





INTRODUCTION

Jesus has always been plan A. Before the foundation of the world, God had planned for His Son to die for the sins of His people. Jesus does not just come out of nowhere in the gospels, but through covenants, promises, prophecies, Christophanies (Old Testament appearances of Jesus), and types (Old Testament characters that behave in a way that corresponds to Jesus' actions or character) Jesus is foretold throughout all of the Old Testament. During Christmas we celebrate Jesus' birth, but His birth is only the tip of the iceberg. During this Advent season, we want to look at Jesus throughout all of scripture. We will start by looking at how the Old Testament prepares the way for Jesus and then we will see how Jesus fulfills the promises and foretelling of Jesus.

What is Advent?

The word Advent means coming or arrival. For Christians, Advent season is a time of celebration as we look at the coming of Jesus Christ as a baby to be our Redeemer. This Advent devotional is meant to help us focus on Christ during the holiday season by looking at Christ throughout the whole of Scripture. While on the road to Emmaus with two of His disciples after the resurrection, Jesus tells them how the Old Testament points to Him.

Luke 24:27

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

There are prophecies, stories, and characters throughout the Old Testament that point to the person, work, and appearance of Jesus as the Messiah. When we see these, it helps us see God's plan as a whole, it reminds us that God is sovereign over all of creation, and it drives us to love and worship God more and more because of how loving He is. Each day is set up to have a passage of scripture to read and a brief reading to consider. I hope that at the end of each reading you will think about how God's grace is shown in this story. It is my prayer that through using this devotional, you are encouraged to focus on Christ in worship and love throughout this season.

NOVEMBER 29

Adam and Eve

Read Genesis 3:1-19

Genesis 3 tells the story of The Fall. Adam and Eve were created by God and placed in perfection in the Garden of Eden. Here God provided for all their needs and met with them in relationship. In spite of all God's provision, when the serpent came offering them lies of godhood, they bit hook, line, and sinker. After their sin, God issued judgment on Adam, Eve, and the serpent. In Genesis 3:15, in the midst of God's judgment on the serpent, He introduces the basis of the gospel.

Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (ESV)

At the first sin, God declares the gospel, the cure for sin, for the first time. Jesus is the offspring that will have his heel bruised by the serpent (the cross) but He will also crush the head of the serpent. Satan's goal was to bring death to God's creation but in that moment, God introduced the way of life through the death and resurrection of His Son. This is the first promise of Jesus.

NOVEMBER 30

Noah

Read Genesis 6

After Adam and Eve humanity did not learn from its mistakes. In fact, Genesis 6:5-7 says,

[5] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [6] And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. [7] So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." (ESV)

Because of their continued sin, God brought judgment on humanity. In the midst of this judgment, God offered salvation to Moses and his family. They were offered life when the rest of humanity received death. In the same way Jesus offers salvation from the judgment and punishment of sin, God offered salvation through the ark. For 120 years Noah built the ark in faith and instead of listening to him as a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), they would suffer judgment for their sin. The story of the ark foreshadows the salvation of God through Christ to a world that has rejected Him.

DECEMBER 1

Abraham

Read Genesis 12:1-9

God called Abraham to be the father of a new nation and a new people. When God called Abraham, He established a covenant with him promising that in Abraham, all the families of the earth would be blessed. This blessing would be found in Christ. In Romans 9, while lamenting the lostness of the Israelites, Paul declares that they had all the blessings of God and also that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would come from their lineage.

Romans 9:5

To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. (ESV)

When God created a nation and people to give His word and promises to, He included His proclamation about the salvation that would come through His Son. Throughout God's working in human history, Christ has always been at the core.

DECEMBER 2

Isaac

Read Genesis 22

Inherent in God's promise to Abraham of being a great nation and having descendants that would outnumber the stars would be Abraham having a child. When Abraham was 100 years old, God finally provided him a son, Isaac. That is why it was so surprising when Isaac was a young man that God called him to sacrifice Isaac to show that Abraham held nothing above God. In honor of God the Father, Abraham was willing to sacrifice His only son. By God's grace, He stayed Abraham's knife and provided a ram caught in the thicket.

Just as the ram took the place as the sacrifice for Isaac, Jesus takes our place as our sacrifice. In the same way that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son, God offered His only Son that we might be forgiven and have life.

DECEMBER 3

Joseph

Read Genesis 45:1-15

Joseph's life was not one of ease. Being favored by his father means he was hated by his brothers. He was hated so much that they faked his death and sold him into slavery. As a slave he was sold to a man named Potiphar, and after rising in the ranks of his household he was falsely accused of raping Potiphar's wife. After spending time in jail, being forgotten by those he had helped, God brought him to Pharaoh's attention and he rose to prominence to bring salvation to God's people, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the beginning of the nation of Israel.

Joseph is often thought of as a picture of Christ. He suffered unjustly to ultimately bring about salvation for God's people. God used Joseph's suffering to provide for his people during a famine. In a greater way, God used the suffering of Jesus to bring salvation to those suffering the famine of sin.

DECEMBER 4

Joseph

Read Exodus 3

When Joseph brought his family to Egypt, everything was good until Joseph died and was forgotten by those in Egypt and the Israelites were made slaves to the Egyptians for just over 400 years. In Exodus, after the people cried out to God for help and deliverance, God sent them a deliverer. Moses was to go as God's emissary to Pharaoh to demand the freedom of His people from slavery, to bring salvation to the nation of Israel.

Sin is slavery. It is slavery to the things God hates that leads to death. Jesus came as our deliverer to bring salvation to God's people.

DECEMBER 5

Passover Lamb

Read Exodus 12:1-32

Nine times Moses had called Pharaoh to release God's people and nine times Pharaoh had said no, and nine times God had sent a plague on Egypt to show His supremacy over the gods of Egypt. The tenth time Moses called on Pharaoh to release the Israelites and Pharaoh denied God promised the worst plague of all, the death of the first born. God provided an escape for His children. They were to sacrifice a lamb and take its blood and apply it to the door frame of the house. When they did this, the death angel would pass over their houses and their children. The blood of the lamb and their faith in God brought them salvation.

In the same way, Jesus is our lamb who died. He died so that our sins, guilt, and shame would be passed over and we would not face the judgment we deserve. The Passover lamb brought them life and is an incredible foreshadowing of what Jesus would come to earth to do for us.

DECEMBER 6

High Priest

Read Hebrews 9:11-14

The Day of Atonement was a special day for the nation of Israel. Leviticus 16 describes in intricate detail all the Chief Priest was supposed to do that day to offer sacrifices for himself, his household, and the nation of Israel. It was only on the Day of Atonement that the High Priest could enter into the Most Holy Place of the temple to offer sacrifices for the nation of Israel. Year after year the High Priest performed the sacred duty.

What the High Priest did year after year, Jesus Christ did once. As our High Priest, Jesus presented a perfect sacrifice, Himself, for the sins of His people. He then entered into the throne room of God to sit at the right hand of the Father to make intercession for His people, not once a year, but once for all of eternity. What the yearly sacrifice of bulls and goats could never do, Jesus did perfectly for all who would trust in Him. He is our High Priest.

DECEMBER 7

Golden Serpent

Read Numbers 21:4-9, John 3:14-16

Salvation is by grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness (because of their refusal to trust God and enter the Promised Land) they began to complain against God and His provision. Sadly, this happened a lot with Israel during this time. At one point, to bring discipline but also remind them of His power and salvation, God sent serpents to begin biting the Israelites and some died. In their cries of repentance, God called on them to make a golden serpent and set it on a pole. If they were bitten by the serpents, all they had to do was look upon the pole in faith that God would heal them, and He did.

Jesus references this story in his conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. He says "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up". Just as the Israelites found healing from their snake bites in the serpent that was lifted up, we find salvation in looking in faith to our Savior who was lifted up on the cross to die for our sins.

DECEMBER 8

Rahab

Read Joshua 2:1-21

Once the 40 years of wondering in the wilderness were over, God brought them into the Promised Land. When they arrived, the first obstacle that was before them was the city of Jericho with its large walls that surrounded and protected the city. As they come to the city, Joshua, who has succeeded Moses as leader, sends in two spies to spy out the land. It becomes known to the king that there are spies in the city so the men hide in the home of a prostitute named Rahab. After protecting them from the guards, Rahab tells the men that the people of Jericho know all about Israel and what God had done for them from the Exodus out of Egypt until now. She declares her belief in the God of Israel and asks them for safety when Israel overtakes the city. The men promise her and her family safety and salvation if she hangs a scarlet cord out her window. Rahab and her family are saved and she actually becomes part of the lineage of Jesus.

The scarlet cord allowed the rest of the Israelites to know that Rahab was not to be harmed and that she was to be saved. It is the scarlet blood of Jesus that declares to the Father that we are saved and spared from judgment. The scarlet cord points foreword to the blood of Jesus and the salvation we would find in Him.

DECEMBER 9

David

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17

David was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). He was far from perfect, but he loved God and sought to honor and worship Him. Once his battles were over, he sought to build God a temple. In God's refusal, He established a covenant with David where He promised that David's house and kingdom would be established forever; that David would have a descendant who reign forever on his throne.

This is Jesus. Born of the line of David who reign forever as king. The Davidic Covenant points forward to Jesus as our king. Jesus is our king who will be victorious over His enemies and who will reign for all eternity. He was born as a baby in a manger, but He will rule eternally on His throne.

DECEMBER 10

Isaiah

Read Isaiah 7:14; 53

The prophets served in a special role. They conveyed God's message to God's people. Often times the messages were timely, confronting the Israelites directly and specifically about God's direction for them or sins they needed to repent of. Other times, they spoke prophetically of things that had not happened yet. God used Isaiah to foretell the coming of the Messiah. A lot of the characters and stories we have looked at so far are pictures or representations pointing to Christ, but here, God uses Isaiah to tell us certain truths about His coming Messiah.

He would be born of a virgin, He would be pierced for our transgressions, God would lay on Him our iniquities, He would be silent while lead to His death, etc. These are all fulfilled in Jesus. The New Testament tells us what Jesus did for us but the stage is set and person and work of Jesus are foretold throughout all the Old Testament.

DECEMBER 11

Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego

Read Daniel 3

The Israelite's continued sin brought about God's discipline on His people. He sent Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians to conquer Israel and bring some of their people back to Babylon as captives with some of those captives, certain young men, being trained and taught to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's government. Along with Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were 3 young men who stood firm to God's standard even while living in a pagan land.

When Nebuchadnezzar commanded everyone to worship a gold statue he had set up, these three men stood, refusing to worship anything or anyone other than God. Nebuchadnezzar told them they would be thrown into a fiery furnace if they did not worship his golden idol, but they still refused, declaring the devotion to God was worth even their own lives. When Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into the furnace, he saw them walking around unharmed with a fourth person that he said appeared like "a son of the gods."

This is often considered a Christophany. This is an Old Testament appearance of Jesus before the incarnation. It was Jesus who showed up and protected these men in the fire. This same Jesus is the one who offers us salvation and protection from the flames of Hell when we trust in Him.

DECEMBER 12

Malachi

Read Malachi 3:1-5

Malachi prophesied about a messenger who would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. As we will see in the coming days, this is John the Baptist who came to prepare the hearts of Israel for the coming of Jesus. In His prophecy, Malachi says the one John is preparing the way for will bring both a purifying soap and judgment.

When Jesus came the first time, He said that He came to bring salvation, not judgment (John 12:47), and this what He did. He brought salvation through His death and resurrection, and He offers this salvation to all who will trust Him in faith. While He came to bring salvation the first time, there will be a second time that Jesus comes. When He comes the second time, He will gather His own to Himself and then He will bring judgment to all those who oppose Him.

We celebrate the salvation of the first coming of Jesus so we do not have to experience the judgment of the second coming of Jesus.

DECEMBER 13

Gabriel

Read Luke 1:5-17

Gabriel is an angel who God often uses to bring messages to certain people. He has three appearances in scripture where he is delivering a message. One to Daniel in the Old Testament and to Zechariah and Mary in the New Testament. Gabriel delivered a message from God to Zechariah, that despite his and his wife's advanced years and infertility, they would have a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah and turn the people's hearts back to God.

The time for foreshadowing and prophecies was over. Now was the time for the Messiah to come and John's role was to call people to repentance to prepare their hearts for what Jesus was going to come and do.

DECEMBER 14

Zechariah

Read Luke 1:67-79

When Gabriel brought his message to Zechariah, Zechariah struggled with belief. Because of this Gabriel declared he would be mute until his son was born. After his son was born, Zechariah was able to speak again after declaring his son was to be named John. His first words are this prophecy about what Jesus had come to do and the role his son would play in it. Jesus would be the horn of salvation from the house of David who was spoken of by the prophets and John would be the prophet of the Most High who would prepare the way for Christ.

John's whole purpose in life was to tell people of the coming Messiah. During the Advent/Christmas season, we celebrate the same message John proclaimed, the Messiah is coming, get ready.

DECEMBER 15

Mary

Read Luke 1:26-38

As we look more at the characters involved in the Christmas story, one of the most famous is Mary, the virgin who would give birth to the Christ. Gabriel proclaimed to her that she would be responsible for being the mother of the Son of Most High. This fulfills prophecies about the virgin birth of the Messiah and him coming from the line of David. All that God had done throughout Old Testament history, building to the coming of the Messiah who would bring salvation for His people, was coming soon and Mary was blessed to be a part of it.

God sometimes uses the most unlikely of people to accomplish His plans. Sometimes He uses kings but sometimes He uses a young lady, betrothed to be married, who was a virgin to birth the savior of the world. God can use anyone in His plans. He is not bound by the things we are. He is not limited to biology and science. He is not bound by our experiences or our past. He is the God who blesses people by using them in His plans.

DECEMBER 16

Elizabeth

Read Luke 1:39-45

When Gabriel told Mary she would become pregnant, he also told her that her cousin, Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, was also pregnant, even though she was older and had been barren. Relatively soon after Mary received her news, she raced to Elizabeth's house to see her. Maybe she was excited. Maybe she was looking for confirmation. If Elizabeth really was 6 months pregnant then surely what she was just told by Gabriel would be true as well.

If Mary was looking for confirmation, she sure got it. When she got to Elizabeth's house and greeted her, the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaped in excitement. Being filled with and prompted by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth proclaimed the greatness of the baby in Mary's belly by declaring Him as her Lord.

We serve a God who loves us. He shows this by sending His son to live and die for our sins, but He also shows this in how He cares for us. Mary would have been nervous and unsure and maybe a little scared after receiving the message from Gabriel, but God placed Elizabeth in her path to encourage her. During a very real world changing experience with Gabriel, God confirmed and comforted Mary through what He was doing in Elizabeth. God's love for us is great but also intimate.

DECEMBER 17

Joseph

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Mary and Joseph were betrothed, meaning they were in the process of being married but weren't married yet. The betrothal and engagement periods were different for Eastern nations than here in the West. First, the parents of the bride and groom would arrange a marriage for their kids. Then, the groom's parents would pay a price to the bride's parents and a contract was signed. Even though they were not yet married, that contract could only be broken through a legal divorce. The actual marriage and consummation of the marriage would not happen for up to a year after the contract signing.

When Mary comes back after spending about 3 months with Elizabeth (Luke 1:56), Joseph became aware she was pregnant (roughly 3-4 months along). Even though this was an arranged marriage, Joseph showed himself to be a man of integrity, compassion, and love toward Mary. He did not seek to make a public deal about this but to divorce her quietly, without bringing shame to her for being pregnant without being married. But God interceded. Through an angel, He spoke to Joseph in a dream telling him what He had told Mary.

Joseph was a man who sought to do what was right. He appears to have lived with integrity but also with a desire to honor and obey God. It was probably because of Joseph's integrity and surrender to God that he was blessed with the opportunity to be the earthly father of Jesus.

DECEMBER 18

John the Baptist

Read John 1:19-34

We have seen the prophecies regarding John and the words of Gabriel and Zechariah in regard to who John is to be. Once he was grown, John lived a different life. He lived in the wilderness and ate wild honey and locusts. He also preached repentance and drew huge crowds. The Jewish leadership wanted to know who he was and why he was doing what he was doing. Basically, he said he was fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy and preparing people for the coming Messiah.

When he sees Jesus come to him while he is baptizing people, he makes the declaration, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." Being Jewish, his audience knew all about the Passover lamb and the sacrifices at the Day of Atonement. They knew what John was saying when he called Jesus the Lamb of God. He was saying Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. He is the one who, once and for all, will satisfy God's justice toward sin for all who believe. All the Passovers and all the sacrifices pointed to the one true lamb who could do what nothing or no one else ever could, cleanse us and make us acceptable to a perfect and holy God.

DECEMBER 19

Caesar Augustus

Read Micah 5:2, Luke 2:1-5

Micah had prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth of Galilee. What could motivate them to travel to a town between 80 to 90 miles to be in Bethlehem so that scripture could be fulfilled? Here is where Caesar Augustus enters the stage. Caesar declared a census be taken and everyone had to travel to the city of their families. Because Joseph was of the lineage of David, he was to travel to Bethlehem, the city of David, with his wife who was around 9 months pregnant.

Caesar Augustus was not a God worshipper. He was a pagan in his religion, his worship, and his lifestyle, but God, being the sovereign God He is, put the idea of a census on the heart and mind of Caesar in order to move Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. God was working behind the scenes in ways no one on earth was aware of but doing so in order to put Joseph and Mary exactly where they were supposed to be. In the same way God is constantly at work around us, often in ways that we are not aware of and my never be aware of this side of Heaven, but we trust that because God loves us, He is working to draw us closer to Him and move us where He wants us to be.

DECEMBER 20

The Shepherds

Read Luke 2:8-20

On the night Jesus was born, God sent angelic messengers to another group, shepherds. There is much that can be said about the shepherds being the ones that received this proclamation and invite. They were not kings or rulers but much more humble in stature. They did not have much social clout because their work kept them around dirty animals. Throughout the foreshadowing of Jesus and His actual life, the picture of a lamb is prevalent, and it is sheep these shepherds were watching over. Jesus calls Himself the good shepherd in John 10 and His sheep hear His voice. God could have called kings and rulers to the birth of His son, but He called lowly shepherds to give witness to the birth of THE King.

More important than who the shepherds were and what they represented is the message the angels gave them. They proclaimed the birth the Savior, Christ the Lord. This was not any baby, this was the Messiah. The one who was promised to bring life and peace to God's children. After seeing such a sight and hearing such a proclamation, they shepherds rushed to Bethlehem to see the child. When they found him with his parents, they told what they saw, and they worshipped. As we celebrate the coming of Christ, let us proclaim to all who will listen that Christ is THE Savior and let us worship Him.

DECEMBER 21

The Magi

Read Matthew 2:1-11

Though they didn't get to Jesus until he was around 2 years old, the wise men are still an important part of Jesus' story. In fact, the gifts they bring declare different aspects about Jesus' life. They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold was a costly material meant for a king. Frankincense is a was an incense that was burned during worship. It pointed to Jesus being worthy of worship because of who He is. Myrrh was sometimes used in embalming, pointing the Jesus' death.

Jesus came to be our king, who would rule and reign in the hearts of those who trust Him and over His creation for eternity. He came as the God man, God in human flesh, so that He could pay the penalty of our sins and die in our place. Because of who He is and what He did for us, He is worthy of our worship and our adoration. He is worthy of our surrender and our trust. He is worthy of our lives.

DECEMBER 22

King Herod

Read Matthew 2:7-18

Sadly, not everyone was excited about the new born king. When King Herod heard from the Magi about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. He was afraid he might lose his power and authority. If the Jews had a new king to rally around, they may try to throw off the chains of oppression from the Roman government and Herod would lose not only his position but potentially his life. Herod's whole way of life was being threatened by this baby and he had to put a stop to it. He tried to get the Magi to tell him where the baby was as they returned from their visit but they were warned by God through a dream not to go back to Herod. So Herod, driven by fear and a lust for power, had all the boys 2 years old and younger in Bethlehem and the surrounding region killed.

Very reminiscent to when Pharaoh killing all the Jewish children in Egypt, Herod resorts to infanticide to keep his power and his throne. Just as God uses Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt, He used Jesus to deliver us from sin and death. He is the great deliverer and the only one that can bring us to life from death.

DECEMBER 23

Simeon and Anna

Read Luke 2:22-38

The stories of Simeon and Anna are stories of God's faithfulness, to them and to Mary and Joseph. It had been 40 days since the birth of Jesus and they were following the Old Testament and bringing him to the temple. It had been 40 days since giving birth to Jesus in a stable. It had been 40 days since a group of shepherds had told them the story of a band of angels telling them where to find the newborn king. It had been months since they had received their own angelic messages and now God was going to give them confirmation once more.

Simeon and Anna were both older and both faithful to love, follow, and worship their God. God had promised Simeon he would see the Christ before death and He blessed Anna with the opportunity to proclaim who Jesus was. As Mary and Joseph hear these proclamations about their baby boy, proclamations that matched what the angel had told them, they marveled. They marveled at God's continued message to them of the child they would raise. They marveled at God's faithfulness to remind them. They marveled at God's goodness to remind them that they weren't crazy and He was still in control.

We serve a God who is faithful. He is faithful to watch over us and comfort us and encourage us and trust us. He uses other people in our lives to show His grace and His faithfulness. He reminds us constantly in His word of who He is and how much He loves us. He shows us His grace daily through the forgiveness of our sins. We serve a God who is faithful.

DECEMBER 24

Jesus

Read Luke 23:26-56

It may be odd to read about the death of Jesus on the day before we celebrate His birth, but it is a good reminder for why He came. He didn't come to be watched over as an infant, but He came to conquer sin as a mighty King. He came to provide the way to salvation. What is so great about the birth of Jesus is what happens 33 years later, that He dies and raises again so that we may live. We look at the cross on Christmas because without the cross, Christmas has no value. Without the resurrection, then Jesus is just another baby. God's plan and Jesus' purpose is why we celebrate, because without Him, we have no hope, no life; but in Him, we are saved and set free.