

WEEK 4 HE IS LOVE

HE IS

SCRIPTURE

Open your Bible and read today's verses with your family.

- Luke 2:11-20

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!' When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.' And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them."

- John 3:16-18

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

- John 15:9

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love."

CONTENT

Read today's devotion aloud with your family, small group, or simply during your personal time with the Lord.

Setting up for the opening of Christmas gifts with friends and family can bring so much delight. Looking through the carefully picked out presents and arranging them just so. Imagining how excited each recipient will be about this gift and how surprised they will be about that one.

It is enough to leave you wondering how our Heavenly Father felt right before His Son finally and fully arrived that night in Bethlehem. Jesus, the divine King wrapped in human flesh. A glorious gift long-planned and picked out - ultimately purposed for our salvation. Was the Father tenderly excited because it was finally here, the beginning of the end of sin and death's grip on mankind? Was His heart full of joy as He thought, "I can't wait... I can't wait for them to see..."? Did He gaze upon Mary's swollen belly one last time with a touch of sadness in His eyes, the anticipation bittersweet as He pictured those who would refuse to receive His most precious gift?

What the Father wrapped up for us in His Son was His love. Jesus is God's love. First John 4:9-10 confirms this truth, "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

There truly is no love like His. It is a love we could not earn and do not deserve. A love that did not try to determine our worth before going to such great lengths to rescue us. A love poured out willingly for us to redeem us. But this love was never intended to stop with us. Notice how 1 John 4:11-12 immediately goes on to read, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."

While there are varying opinions on the idea of regifting things you have received to someone else, the love we have received in Christ is meant to be regifted. Of course, we do not give it away because we do not want His love or because we see no use for it. His love is so expansive and extravagant that we cannot possibly keep it all for ourselves. Jesus is a love we cannot contain! How can we not share the love that has changed everything for us? How can we not point others to the one who restores and redeems? How can we refuse to love as we have been loved so freely and fully? The unfading, unfailing love of Christ compels us to share Him with others - to tell of Him and move in compassion with Him.

Here is one final note of miraculous hope for us to consider this Christmas. The gift of who Jesus is will never be a gift we only get to unwrap one day a year. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Every day, we wake up to the truth of who He is. We get to rest and rejoice in the knowledge that we are loved by Him and have been rescued by Him. Because of Jesus, the One in whom all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, we can be full of hope, full of peace, full of joy, full of God's love. And out of that fullness, we can love and worship Him. We can love and bless others.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use these questions to start conversation with your family, small group, or simply to further your own understanding and application of today's scripture and devotion

1. When someone gives us a gift, the kind response is to thank them. How can we live a life that reveals we are thankful for the gift God has given us in Jesus?
2. Presents are given, but they also must be received and accepted. God has given the gift of Jesus. Why must we be sure we receive the gift of Jesus? What does it mean to accept Him as your Lord and Savior?
3. Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Why is it important to know that our ability to be at peace with God through salvation is a gift and not something we can work for or earn?

CONNECTIONS

Use the following activities and ideas throughout the coming week to further connect the lessons from today's scripture and devotion as well as deepen connections with family, friends, and community.

1. As you wrap and unwrap Christmas presents this year, take some time to thank Jesus for being willing to be wrapped and unwrapped for your salvation.
2. We could never do enough good to earn God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ or to repay Him. He gave to us freely. Find someone you can give a gift to who can do nothing for you in return.
3. When you gather for a nightly dinner, share an example of what you did that day to put someone else first and show the love of Jesus (opened a door for someone, let someone go in front of you in line, helped an older person, helped a friend, etc.).

MEMORY VERSE

Use the memory verse to lock in the Biblical truth of today's lesson throughout the week.

Luke 2:10

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

*"Glory to God in the highest, and
on earth peace among those with
whom he is pleased!"*

Luke 2:14

