

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2023

of Salvation I AM Creator Man of Sorrows Mediator Son of David Rock
Holy One of God Only Begotten Alpha and Omega Author and Finisher o
unselor Prince of Peace King of Kings Great High Priest Jesus Lamb
esurrection and the Life The Vine Son of Man Savior Lord Advocate
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WHAT'S IN A NAME?



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What's your name? Do you have a nickname? Where did that name come from? Jesus Christ was called many things. And each of those names mean something. It describes something about His character, His title, or His work. Even his name "Jesus" was chosen for a reason. We will look at 25 names of Jesus, 5 per week during the Advent Season. There are many more, but this will get us started. Advent starts 4 Sundays before Christmas, and we will carry the devotion one more week, up to the New Year. Advent simply means "coming." What was really coming at Christmas in this tiny baby? Hope was coming. Love was coming. Peace was coming. Joy was coming. Salvation was coming. There is power in a name. So, as we look at "What's In A Name?" this Christmas, may you be amazed at the depth and width of the Almighty God.

How to Get the Most Out of the Advent Devotions

The Christmas season lends itself to both being busy and thinking about Jesus. It has its benefits and its challenges. And yet suddenly, the season seems to be over before we know it. Life will go on into the next year and so on. The encouragement is "Don't let this season be another season of regular routine." Christmas time is a great opportunity to increase the rhythm of reflecting on God's work in saving humanity (which you and your family are included).

Being a master at anything (woodworking, designer, crafter, etc.) takes lots of practice, lots of learning, and lots of repetition. It also involves plenty of thought, focus, and determination. You'll get out of this devotion what you can put into it. Simply reading it and moving to the next task of the day will not yield the same spiritual impact as dedicating 30 minutes each morning and evening to read, study, journal, create, question, conversate, worship, and pray through the material.

If you're married and/or have kids living at home with you, consider ways to engage in conversation about some of these names. We've included a few suggestions along the way, but feel free to look ahead and see how the Holy Spirit leads you during these moments.

These devotions are packed with Scripture references. For the sake of space, we did not copy the text on these pages. So, grab a bible and open God's Word to read the verses with your own eyes. Utilize any of the above suggestions to gain further value.

There are 5 names/devotions per week. Perhaps use the other days to review them all, do further study, or focus, meditate, and rest in the ones that really spoke to you.



WEEK 1: NOVEMBER 26 – DECEMBER 2

Holy One of God – Mark 1:24

Questions of Curiosity: Have you ever been selected to do a particular job? Were you selected because of unique abilities? How would you describe Holy? What would be an example of when purity is important?

“Holy” means to be pure or to be set apart for and by God. We know that Jesus was sent to Earth for a purpose: to save mankind from our sins by dying on the cross and conquering death with his resurrection. And He could do so because He was perfect. He was pure. He was holy. The passage in Mark 1:21-28 is the first passage in Mark where Jesus is teaching as a part of His ministry. The crowds were amazed that Jesus was teaching with authority, unlike the other teachers of the law. He was *set apart* from them. Right away the evil spirits recognized Jesus as the Holy One of God—the One set apart by God to fulfill His purpose on Earth, and who was given all God’s authority on Earth, unlike the teachers and prophets that went before Him. Even today, some still refer to Jesus as just a “good teacher” or “prophet.” But here we clearly see that He was much more. Jesus was God and was recognized as such by the spirits. If only those listening to Jesus would have recognized it as well. Jesus is the Holy One of God.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading: _____.

Alpha and Omega – Revelation 1:8; Colossians 1:18

Questions of Curiosity: It’s nice when someone else goes first. Have you ever been challenged to be the first person to try something scary or unique? Or have you ever followed someone on an adventure and you’re glad you had someone with you who had done it before?

Alpha and Omega are Greek letters. Alpha being the first letter in the alphabet and Omega being the last letter. Another way to say it is: “Jesus is the first and the last.” And when you’re the first and the last, you’re everything in between. Jesus is the one who started *it* and He will be the one who finishes *it*. What is *it*? Those passages say Jesus was the first one to rise from the dead. However, Jesus wasn’t the first to rise from the dead! So, what does first really mean? Even though others rose from the dead before Him; and even though Jesus Himself raised some of them from the dead, they eventually died again. We don’t see them walking the earth nor was there any indication that they were carried away into heaven like Jesus was in Acts 1. Jesus was the first to rise from the dead and to never die again. His resurrection showed His power over sin and over death. Jesus also gets to have the “final word” in the end of times during the “Day of the Lord” when He judges the world, the Devil, and his demons. Because of this, we can follow Him into victory over our sin and death. When we accept Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins, we have buried that old sin nature and have been resurrected with a new life, an eternal life with Him. He is Alpha and Omega.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading: _____.

Author and Finisher of Our Faith – Hebrews 12:1-4

Questions of Curiosity Have you ever worked on something that took a long time or a lot of hard work and then felt a great sense of accomplishment when you were done? What kept you going to finish what you started? Have you read a really good book and then you followed the author, applied their advice, and embraced their other teachings? How does that relate to this description of Jesus?

Other translations phrase it as the “source and perfecter” or “pioneer and perfecter” or “champion”. Jesus, as the author not only creates or starts the work, but He is the example to follow because He did it perfectly. The verse goes on to say that Jesus wrote “the playbook” on living out in faith as He endured the cross because He saw the results of what would happen after the cross. He endured hostility and shame on the cross until He rose again and ascended into heaven where He is seated next to God the Father’s throne. Jesus believed beyond what was happening to Him at that moment. The inspiration for us is to not give up, even when it’s hard. It’s not a willful determination, but a step of confidently putting our faith in Jesus. Because of this, we can and must get rid of the sin which slows us down. He is the Author and Finisher of Our Faith.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading:_____.

Beloved Son/Only Begotten Son – John 1:18, 34; 3:16; Matthew 17:5; Luke 1:35

Questions of Curiosity: What makes you unique in your family? Are there any advantages and disadvantages to being an “only child”? In what ways is adoption life transforming?

Those who have accepted Jesus as their Savior have the right to be called children of God (John 1:12). Yet when Jesus is called the Son of God...it’s extra special. God the Father says that Jesus is His beloved or “favorite” son. Jesus is God’s favorite because Jesus is His one and only unique Son. Jesus is exactly like the Father. He is the perfect reflection and radiance of God. Jesus is God. Even though we are also His children, we are not completely like Jesus. Nature and Nurture have significant influence. We are God’s adopted children, and we do share in His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We get to be around Him and are valued by the Father just as He loves Jesus. We aren’t His “biological” sons or daughters, but we’re important enough that God was willing to sacrifice His one and only unique Son on the cross for us. And Jesus was willing to be that sacrifice. He’s a great loving BIG brother. He is the Beloved Son and the Only Begotten Son.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading:_____.

Bread of Life – John 6:32-35

Questions of Curiosity: What’s your favorite food? How much time would you save every day if you didn’t have to think about food? When was the last time you were really hungry that you’d eat almost anything?

Bread has been a food on this earth for a very long time. You can put many things on bread from peanut butter and jelly, marshmallow fluff, leftover turkey from Thanksgiving, and just about anything to make a delicious sandwich. Jesus calls Himself the Bread of Life. He compares Himself to the manna that appeared on the ground in the wilderness when the Israelites were leaving Egypt. The people had asked for food, Moses prayed for food, and the manna appeared. Everyone thought Moses was awesome to have that ability and connection with God. But Jesus is saying that He wasn’t like Moses who had to ask God for bread. He is the actual bread that came down from heaven to feed the people. And unlike that manna bread in the wilderness, He would satisfy their hunger. That manna would only last for that day before it would spoil. They had to go out and get manna every day. But whoever ate the bread He offered, would never be hungry and would never die. And they wouldn’t need to put something in with this bread to make it taste better. This bread is that good. He is the Bread of Life.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading:_____.



WEEK 2: DECEMBER 3 - 9

Immanuel – Isaiah 7:14

Questions of Curiosity: In what ways do you sense God’s presence in your life? When has God felt very far away? How does either one cause you to think, feel, or act daily?

“Immanuel” means “God with us.” People have been trying to “get” to God for a very long time. The priests of the Old Testament would have to go to great lengths to be where God’s presence resided. Priests had to go to the most Holy and inner part of the tabernacle, Moses climbed up to Mount Sinai, and Elijah was met with a great wind, earthquake, and fire before God met him. But in the New Testament we see a much different story. God came to us. God came to us in the form of a baby in a stable. There was no earthquake, wind, or fire. No one had to shield their face or take off their sandals. God was with humanity as a baby and then as a child and then as a man. Throughout Jesus’ life, God was with man: living together, eating together, walking together. And still God is with us. When Jesus was taken up to Heaven in Matthew 28:20, He told his disciples that He will be with them to the end of the age. We can now pray directly to God and He has given us His Holy Spirit to guide us as well. God is truly with us. Jesus is Immanuel.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading: _____.

Chief Shepherd/Good Shepherd – 1 Peter 5:1-7; John 10:1-14

Questions of Curiosity: What kind of tasks do you think makes a shepherd good compared to a bad shepherd?

A shepherd watches out for His sheep to protect them and to guide them. A bad shepherd would leave the sheep and risk a thief coming in and stealing or killing his sheep. A good shepherd would stand watching over his sheep or put them in a place where they could be watched by a gatekeeper. Jesus goes on to say that He is a good shepherd because He would die for His sheep. This would be very hard to understand because a dead shepherd wouldn’t be able to protect and guide His sheep. Of course, Jesus was hinting at His upcoming death on the cross which would provide salvation to the sheep. Protecting the sheep would be good, but providing lasting protection from sin would be as good as it gets. Jesus is the greatest good shepherd. Later, as Jesus ascends into heaven, Jesus then tells His disciples to feed the sheep, which means they were to help take care and guide the followers of Jesus. The disciples, and now pastors and elders, are referred to as shepherds. They are to protect and guide the sheep with the same dedication and attitude that Jesus had. Some people like to call these pastors and elders as ‘under-shepherds’ because they don’t replace Jesus as the good shepherd. Rather, Jesus is called their chief shepherd or the boss shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading: _____.

Cornerstone – 1 Peter 2:1-9; 1 Corinthians 3:9-11

Questions of Curiosity: What kind of materials and placement make a solid foundation? Would you think differently if the building was a skyscraper versus a shed? What kind of spiritual materials are needed for a solid spiritual foundation?

A cornerstone was a stone that had to be perfectly square and flat on at least 3 sides. The more sides that were square, the better. It was the first stone laid in building a house. Large stones were used as a foundation and the first stone laid would begin the design and shape of the house. If this stone was not square and flat, it would not provide the proper support as a strong foundation. Builders would go through piles of rocks looking for just the right cornerstone. Jesus was overlooked as the “cornerstone” to our salvation because He was not what they expected the Savior (or Messiah) to look like. They expected the Messiah to be a King for the government or a mighty warrior. And because Jesus was a humble man with no rich upbringing and eventually died on a cross, many rejected Jesus as the Savior. For those who have believed Jesus as their Savior, Jesus is a firm foundation. He is the strong foundation and everything we do is built on that Him. Jesus told Peter that Peter was a pebble and on “this rock” (Jesus), He would build His church. The church has certainly grown since He started it over 2000 years ago. He is the Cornerstone.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading:_____.

Wonderful Counselor – Isaiah 9:6

Questions of Curiosity: What is a saying or parable of Jesus that fascinates you the most? Do you know someone who is full of wit and always seems to have a good answer to people’s questions?

In Isaiah 9, there is a future telling of a king that will come and will be amazing. Jesus certainly fulfills this description of this coming king as He was a child being born, a son that was given to bring great light to those living in darkness. Consider this title of ‘Wonderful Counselor.’ It probably describes this King’s ability to strategize and give wisdom to the nation. Another way of saying it is “the one who counsels wonders.” The wisdom that comes from the King’s mouth is remarkable. It would be things no one had ever heard before. People who heard Jesus were always amazed at what He said. Even as a young boy, he was teaching the Teachers at the synagogue. And it’s not only what Jesus said that was wonderful. He himself was laying out the amazing strategy, plan, and policy of rescue. John calls Jesus “the Word.” This Word was with God in the beginning. This Word was coming into the world. This Word brought light to everyone. This Word brought truth and grace. Jesus truly was the one who counsels wonders. He is the Wonderful Counselor.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading:_____.

Door – John 10:1-10; Luke 11:5-13

Questions of Curiosity: Can you count how many doors you walk through in 1 day? What makes a good door?

In this story, Jesus not only calls himself the good shepherd, but he is also the door of the sheep pen. A door keeps things in and keeps things out. A door prevents the sheep from wandering out in any direction and getting lost. A door also provides the designed way out to the pasture. Jesus is saying He is that door. When we go to that door, we get security from getting lost and direction for the good life. Sometimes, thieves and robbers will come to the door and promise us good things but they only desire to use us for their gain. In the end, we get destroyed rather than experiencing the benefits of the pasture. Jesus comes to bring us life and to give it in abundance. Another passage tells us that Jesus is standing at the door and knocking (Revelation 3:20). Another passage says that if we knock on the door, it will be opened (Luke 11:9). Jesus is the way to life. And Jesus is knocking on the door to our hearts so we can open and accept Him in. It’s good to know that we can knock on the door, God will hear our prayers and open a door. He is the door.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading:_____.



WEEK 3: DECEMBER 10 - 16

Image of God – 2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15

Questions of Curiosity: Who in your family do you look most alike? Is there a celebrity that people say you look like? Has that ever worked to your advantage?

Genesis 1:27 tells us that WE are made in the image of God: male and female are made in His image and His likeness. We all have *some* of the attributes of our Heavenly Father, but not all. We are created with similarities in structure and function. Yet, Jesus is the only one who embodies **all** of God’s characteristics and is THE exact image of God. When people looked at Him, they were literally seeing God in the flesh. Even though Jesus took on the likeness of humanity, He did not give up His Godhood. If you read further in Colossians 1, you read that “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [Jesus]” (verse 19). The deity of Jesus is undeniable. Jesus encompassed **all** of God’s attributes, **all things** were created by him and for him, and He reconciled **all things** to himself (God). Whatever quality you can think of for God, these passages remind us that Jesus is the same. Jesus is the Image of God.

- Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading: _____.

Everlasting Father – Isaiah 9:6; John 8:51-58

Questions of Curiosity: Have you ever called someone by the wrong name several times before you were corrected? How often do people pronounce your name incorrectly?

In Isaiah, the prophet foretold that a child born would be called the ‘Everlasting Father’ or the ‘Eternal Father’. For the Jews, they understood that the child would grow up to be a great king with a great nation that would last forever. He would be the beginning of a new great nation, like ‘Father Abraham’ and restoring the Davidic Throne. They couldn’t image that this child could ever refer to God coming in the flesh. They understood that there was One True God who existed eternally and was already their spiritual Father. So, when Jesus claims to be existing before Abraham and claims that He can give eternal life, it was confusing because that meant that Jesus was God. It meant that Jesus was the One True God. It meant that Jesus was their spiritual Father from the Old Testament. How can that be? How can the eternal God be also a man who was born as a baby like any other human? This child born was not going to be a great king with a great nation on earth as they envisioned it; but, because He was, and is, and will always be the Everlasting Father, God was setting up an astonishing kingdom that really would be everlasting. He is the Everlasting Father.

- Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading: _____.

Ruler/Lord of Lords/King of Kings – Matthew 2:6; Colossians 3:23-24; Acts 2:36; Revelation 19:11-16

Questions of Curiosity: Who's the boss in your house? Who's the boss of your boss? What kind of attitude should you have knowing that God is the Ruler over all rulers?

Before the birth of Jesus, it was foretold that He would be a sovereign, a leader, or a governor as some translate it. This was great news for the people who didn't like the current ruler and government. Becoming a nation again with their own leader looked like it was no longer just a dream. But as Jesus later dies and rises back to life and ascends into heaven, it's clear that His rule was not what they hoped for. It was even better. God was to be the ruler and leader of every person who believed in Him. God could be their master and their king even when there was another leader and king in power on earth. That's because He is the Master over all masters. He is the Lord over all lords, and He is the King over all kings. You could also say that He is the President over all presidents. God would rule and lead from His throne in heaven. God would rule and lead through the hearts, hands, and feet of those who follow Him. And one day, during the end of times, Jesus will return to bring judgment, set up His direct rule, and show His power as that Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. He is the Ruler.

- Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.

Great High Priest – Hebrews 4:14-16

Questions of Curiosity: Have you ever tried to solve a dispute through email or text message? How did that go? Have you ever needed to hire a lawyer to advocate on your behalf?

A priest in the Old Testament is someone who helped offer the sacrifices for the people's sin to be forgiven. The priest was necessary in offering a sacrifice for sins. The High Priest would be the only one to have access into the Holy of Holies but only after he sanctified himself. The Holy of Holies was a special place in the temple or tabernacle that God's presence would be. It was a place for the Ark of the Covenant which carried the special items of Israel's relationship with God such as the 10 Commandments on stone tablets. This special place was set apart from the rest of the sanctuary by a big curtain. When Jesus died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sins, there was no human priest helping with that sacrifice. Jesus, as God, did it Himself. So, Jesus was not only the sacrifice, but He was the one offering the sacrifice. He was the High Priest. And because Jesus is God, He always has direct access to God's presence. When Jesus died, the big curtain split in half from the top to the bottom (Matthew 27:51). That symbolized that everyone now has access to God's special presence through Jesus Christ. Jesus made it possible for us to approach God directly. We don't need anyone else relaying messages to God. He is the Great High Priest.

- Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.

Jesus – Matthew 1:21

Questions of Curiosity: What does your name mean? Do you know why you were given that name?

Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Joseph, the engaged husband to Mary, both heard from an angel that the son born to them was to be named Jesus. Why Jesus? Was Jesus a special name? Jesus is a Greek word for the Hebrew name Joshua which means "Jehovah (YHWH - God) is Salvation." Both Joshua and Jesus were not unique names. There were other boys and men named Jesus and Joshua during the days of Jesus (Colossians 4:11). But after Jesus Christ was given that name, it took on special recognition and 'celebrity status'. Jesus was to be called Jesus because He was bringing salvation to the world. There is no other name in the world that represents that. It's by the name of Jesus that we can and must be saved (Acts 4:12). The name of Jesus wasn't just a name because God always liked that name, it was a name that would forever change the world. He is Jesus.

- Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.



WEEK 4: DECEMBER 17 - 23

Mighty God – Isaiah 9:6

Questions of Curiosity: Have you ever *withheld* your authority or influence to see how a situation would play out? Why did you make that decision? What would it have been like if you just stepped in and took control?

“Mighty” is another word for “powerful” or “full of might.” We certainly see God’s might when He plagued Egypt, parted the Red Sea, destroyed Jericho and several other cities throughout history. Jesus, as God, displayed His might, too. He commanded the sea to be still (Mark 4:35-41), He drove out demons and performed many miracles. Knowing that Jesus had all the power and might of God, we also know that He could have stopped His excruciating crucifixion. He had the power to stop the soldiers or even to come down from the cross and amaze the crowds. There would’ve been no doubt that He was God. But He didn’t. The Almighty God chose to withhold His ability and allow himself to be subdued, restrained, and nailed to a cross to the death! And He did it for us. How humbling and overwhelming that realization is. Jesus is Almighty God.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading: _____.

Lamb of God – John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 5:11-13

Questions of Curiosity: Have you ever been compared to an animal? Many personality tests use animals to describe human behavior. What animal represents you this Christmas season?

When God was rescuing His people from Egypt’s slavery, God uses some harsh tactics including the killing of the oldest son of each family. To trigger the Spirit of God to pass over a house, the household had to sacrifice a sheep or a goat that was without defect or blemish and apply the blood around the door. This sacrifice of lambs continued in the rituals of forgiveness as Israel left Egypt and wandered in the wilderness, as well as when they became a nation in the Promised Land. These types of sacrifices were necessary for the forgiveness of sins. It’s the way God intended to show the seriousness of sin and the significance of having a substitute. This type of sacrifice would not be enough to cover your sins once and for all though. Jesus was a sinless man so when He died for the sins of the world, it was sufficient. Jesus was the perfect lamb that was sacrificed as a substitute for your sins. He is the Lamb of God.

Write down one thing you noticed from today’s Scripture reading: _____.

The Way/Truth/Life – John 14:1-6

Questions of Curiosity: What are some of the most valuable items you own? What would happen if you discovered they were fakes?

Any time there is something worth much value, someone will try to make a cheaper version or even pretend that theirs is the same. During the times of Jesus, many people were claiming to be the savior of the world or even teaching in the name of God. These were false prophets, false teachers, and false saviors. Jesus proved Himself to be the real deal through miracles, teaching things that no one could debate, and revealing the truth about someone's life that only God would know. His disciples had seen so many amazing things. But when Jesus told them about His upcoming death and His promise to prepare them a place at His Father's house, some could not believe or understand it. They asked for the directions to His Father's house! Jesus says He is the road to the house. He is the true way. There's no shortcut. Other people can promise all sorts of things, but only Jesus can deliver. In Him is life and that life is the light of men. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.

Light of the World – John 1:1-9; John 8:12

Questions of Curiosity: How many things did you do today after you turned a light on? Imagine doing them in the dark.

A small spark can create a consuming fire. The small twinkling of the stars at night can guide a ship crew home. Light can be so valuable and so powerful because most things are harder to do in the dark. The same is true for our spiritual lives. The light that Jesus gives, gives life. And the light that Jesus gives cannot be overtaken by a cloudy sky or a large area of darkness. The light that Jesus gives is not for exceptional people. His light is for everyone. And even though Jesus currently doesn't live on earth, His light still shines all over. That's because Jesus calls His own followers the 'Light of the World' (Matthew 5:14-16). If Jesus was the spark, we need to be the consuming fire. If Jesus was a star in the sky, we need to be the other stars that help people identify the 'Pole Star', the star that helps set the compass direction and find their way home. Jesus is the Light of the World.

Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.

Messiah – John 1:41; John 4:7-26; Acts 10:38

Questions of Curiosity: Did anyone throw you a party when you started a new job? What kind of welcome did you receive?

Messiah means "the anointed One." Another word for Messiah is Christ. Christ was not Jesus' last name. Christ was a title like President or Principal. The Messiah was someone who was anticipated for a long time. Prophecies from the Old Testament pointed to a great King reigning again. This was great news since there wasn't a King in the nation for hundreds of years. Kings and even prophets often had oil poured or rubbed on their head when they were selected for that job. That anointing ritual represented that they were the Chosen One by God. Later in His ministry, Jesus was anointed with perfume before His death. This was showing that He was the Chosen and Anointed One. Jesus was the anticipated King and Prophet that would save His people. However, this was not the beginning of His reign. He was actually anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism, at the beginning of His ministry on earth. His anointing was not with normal oil because His kingdom was not normal. He was anointed with the Spirit as He brought a spiritual kingdom across the world. Jesus is the Messiah.

Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.



WEEK 5: DECEMBER 24 - 30

Prince of Peace – Isaiah 9:6

Questions of Curiosity: When have you experienced an inner peace that doesn't make sense based on the circumstances? What situation are you praying for peace to prevail?

It is interesting that Jesus is referred to as the Prince of Peace in Isaiah and yet He himself states that He did not come to bring peace, but division and the sword (Matthew 10:34, Luke 12:51). Jesus was talking about the division that is created among those who believe in Him and those who don't, sometimes even in the same family. He says that the world will hate Christians because of our belief in Him (Matthew 10:22). So where is the peace? The peace that is referred to in Isaiah is twofold. One, a spiritual peace with God against sin. After Jesus' death, there was no longer a need for further shedding of blood to satisfy God's wrath. Jesus brought peace between the division of sin and God. This is a huge spiritual and inner peace that exists equally during physical conflict. Second, there is a peace that will be experienced in eternity. One day we will be called to our true home to be with the Prince of Peace forever. Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading: _____.

Resurrection and the Life – John 11:11-27

Questions of Curiosity: What do you look forward to in the future?

In this passage in John, Lazarus has died. Lazarus was a close and loved friend to Jesus. Yet, when Jesus heard that Lazarus was about to die, Jesus did not rush to help. Jesus did not even heal Him from where He was. Jesus had healed others without being in their presence before, but Jesus did nothing at that moment to help His friend. Why? Well, Jesus allowed Lazarus to die because He wanted to show His miraculous power of death. Soon He Himself would rise from the dead. Jesus used this moment to show His power and to teach some truth. Lazarus' sisters both believed that Jesus could have helped Lazarus if Jesus had arrived earlier. But since He didn't, Martha and Mary took comfort in believing that Lazarus would one day rise from the dead at the last day when all the righteous will rise. However, Jesus took the occasion to say He was the resurrection and the life. They didn't need to just believe in something that would happen in the future. They could believe in experiencing life now. And then Jesus displayed His power in bringing Lazarus back to life. Jesus' resurrecting power isn't just for a future occurrence. He gives life to dead souls in the here and now. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.

Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading: _____.

Rock – 1 Corinthians 10:4

Questions of Curiosity: Have you been to a natural spring? Why and how does water come out of high elevations?

Paul, the writer of the letter to the church at Corinth, said that the spiritual rock which the Israelites drank from was Jesus Christ. Paul is referring to a time when Moses led the Israelites from Egypt and while in the desert, the people complained about being thirsty. God instructed Moses to hit a rock with his staff and water would come out. Indeed, when Moses hit the rock, the rock split and water gushed out creating a stream in the desert for all the people and animals to drink. Jesus is the rock where spiritual streams of living water flow. Getting water from a rock sounds strange. Getting water from a rock is supernatural. Only God can do that. And that's the point. The salvation and spiritual water that Jesus was giving was nothing done by human hands and through good deeds. Earlier, we learned that Jesus was the cornerstone rock that set a great foundation. Now we know that streams of living water flow from that rock so that everyone who wants to can drink freely from that spiritual water. That's a great rock to build your life on. A wise person builds their house on solid ground rather than sinking sand (Matthew 7:24-27). Jesus is the Rock.

Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.

True Vine – John 15:1-5

Questions of Curiosity: What's your favorite fruit and favorite vegetable? Do they grow on vines or trees?

There are several vegetables and fruits that grow on vines. Green beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, watermelons, and of course grapes grow on vines. And just like most vegetables and fruits, they grow while being connected to a larger source such as a tree or a branch or a vine. The fruit and vegetables get its nutrients from the source. Without the source, the fruit and veggies are unable to grow. Once the fruit and veggie disconnect from the source, it stops growing. It may continue to ripen, but it can't maintain life for too long before it begins to decay. Jesus is saying that we are like a branch on the vine that is producing fruit, but we can't produce fruit if we are disconnected from the source. Jesus is not just "a" source for us to connect to. Jesus calls Himself the "true" vine which means that He is the real and trustworthy vine. There may be other vines that look valuable or have some promising benefits, but only He is the true vine. When we are connected to Him, we will produce much "fruit". He is the True Vine.

Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.

Word – John 1:1-14

Questions of Curiosity: What is something someone said to you long ago that you will never forget? Why did those words make such an impact?

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). In the beginning was the Word (John 1:1). In the beginning there was nothing, and then God said, "Let there be...." and there was. With God's word, came all sorts of matter, minerals, molecules, dimensions, and depth. Anytime God said something, it happened. God said, "let there be light" and there was light. God said, "let us make man in our image" and Adam and Eve were formed. When God said, "do not _____ or you will die", death came as Adam did what he wasn't supposed to do. God never lies. His words are truth-telling and righteous. His Word can judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. His words are filled with care and concern. His words are comforting. Jesus is "The Word" that created all things and would become flesh and come into the world as a baby. This Word brought hope, joy, peace, and love. This Word brought salvation. Psalm 119:81 "I long for Your salvation; I put my hope in Your word." It's not just a statement or an idea or a bunch of words on a paper that we believe in. We believe in and find our salvation in the One that spoke creation into existence. Jesus is the Word.

Write down one thing you noticed from today's Scripture reading:_____.