



BURNHAM ON SEA

BAPTIST CHURCH



small

wonder

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BURNHAM ON SEA BAPTIST CHURCH | COLLEGE STREET | TA8 1AR

www.burnhambaptists.org



DAY 1

Psalm 111:3-5

God's memory box

My mum has a memory box filled with treasures from when my brothers and I were born – locks of hair, first teeth, hospital name bands, and first words spoken. Every now and then, she reopens the box to remember the four small wonders she brought into the world.

The psalmist says that God ‘has caused his wonders to be remembered.’ God’s wonders are His works – in creation, in history, and in our lives. Throughout Scripture, God intentionally calls His people to remember. Through the Passover, they remember His rescue; in the tabernacle, they remember His

creation and their identity; in the Psalms, they remember His provision in the wilderness; and in stone monuments like the Ebenezer, they remember His deliverance through trials.

Remembering isn't just nostalgia – it's a spiritual discipline. It stirs worship, strengthens our faith, and rekindles wonder.

In this Advent prayer journey, we'll open God's memory box of wonders, recalling His faithfulness to His covenant promise, ultimately fulfilled in the small wonder of the Christ child Jesus – the infinite in an infant. Pause each day, and don't miss the wonderful works of God this Advent.

Prayer

Lord, as I open Your memory box this Advent, may I remember Your incredible, wonderful works that have transformed my life. And in whatever tasks and challenges I face today, may these memories stir worship, faith, and wonder in me. Amen.

DAY 2

Genesis 22: 14-18

Who cares?

Abraham names the place where God's promise and blessing are given 'The Lord Will Provide'. He's expressing a deep trust that God sees and will meet his needs – just as He did with the ram in place of Isaac. The name Abraham chooses also conveys the meaning 'The Lord sees' – not just observing, but looking out for us with care and intention. Hagar, too, called God 'The One who sees me' (Genesis 16:13).

These names remind us that God is not distant. He sees. He provides. We often believe in God's big plans for the world, but struggle to see His hand in the small, messy details of our everyday lives. We ask, 'Do you see me, God?'

The wonderful truth is, He does. He sees our to-do lists and stresses. He sees our income and bills. God's powerful plans are worked out in our ordinary and painful places. Wonder is found when we realise God is intentionally involved in our everyday lives.

This Advent, may you know that God still sees us and provides for us personally. Jesus is the answer to our deepest question: 'Who sees me? Who cares?'

Prayer

Lord, to be seen is to be known – thank You for seeing me. Help me trust Your provision in every part of my daily life. Amen.

DAY 3

Isaiah 28:26-29

Pressure, purpose, presence

Isaiah compares God's work in our lives to that of a farmer who, to cultivate the best fruit, applies different kinds of pressure to different grains. The wisdom and plans that a farmer employs to cultivate the desired harvest help illustrate the greater, more wonderful plans of God.

Today we pause to marvel at the wisdom and care of our God, 'whose plan is wonderful, whose wisdom is magnificent'. His plans are not distant or abstract. They are worked out in the soil of our everyday lives.

We may love the idea that God has a plan for us, but we may not enjoy the process behind it. God could have kept Daniel out of the lions' den, made the wilderness easy for Israel, removed Paul's thorn, or waited until Joseph and Mary were married – but He

didn't. And we may not know why at the time. Yet through each trial, His purposes were being worked out.

Just as a farmer prepares the ground, God tends to our hearts. Even affliction – though painful – is His threshing tool, loosening us from what hinders and preparing us for fruitfulness. He never overworks the soil. His timing is perfect, His methods wise, His presence constant.

This Advent, may we trust that God is at work – even in our stresses, temptations, and rejections. His plan is unfolding, even today, under the pressures we face.

Prayer

Lord, help me to trust in the wisdom of Your wonderful plans. Help me to see what You want me to learn from the situations and circumstances I'm faced with right now. Do Your work in me today, break up the ground of my heart, and plant Your character within me. And may I come to see the wonder of Your plans for me. Amen.

DAY 4

1 Chronicles 16:7-14

Sing us a song

Forrest Frank is a young Christian music artist who's created a huge buzz on social media. He was named Billboard's Top New Christian Artist in 2023. His album 'Child of God', released in July 2025, went to the number one spot on the iTunes 'All Genres Chart'.

His songs are connecting with a cultural moment and a new generation who are searching for meaning, truth, and hope.

In our reading today, as the Ark of the Covenant is brought into Jerusalem, David gives the people a 'new song'. Actually, it's the sum of three psalms – but the remix is a new song to both rebuild the faith of the people and announce God's wonderful plans to a new generation.

Worship songwriters are always cultivating new words and tunes for us to celebrate and share the wonderful things God has done. Songs are a powerful way to affirm and communicate truth. I heard of an Amazon delivery driver who makes sure to leave the radio on a Christian station when he hands over the van, in the hope that it encourages the next driver. Who knows,

maybe they'll discover something of God's plans for their lives through it.

How could you sing (okay, that may be stretching it – at least share) a song that you love with someone this Advent as a way of conveying something of God to them?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the gift of music and the way it helps us remember Your wonderful works and plans. May the music I listen to inspire a life worthy of all You've done for me. Amen.

DAY 5

Luke 2:1-7

The wonder of a census

It may seem early in Advent for this reading, but it plays a key role in God's wonderful plan. Helen Keller said, 'Administration is the art of turning vision into reality – one detail at a time.' Today, we see how God turns His plans into reality through an administrative decision.

Caesar Augustus was the most powerful man in the world. The Roman senate declared him 'God

incarnate on earth,’ and the poet Virgil wrote that he was the divine king of salvation for whom mankind had waited. Caesar even called himself the ‘son of God,’ claiming divinity through his adoptive father, Julius Caesar. He inaugurated a 12-day celebration of his greatness – called the 12 Days of Advent – and promised peace through his reign.

Yet Luke’s Gospel tells us that this emperor’s decision to take a census – an act of administration – would quietly serve God’s sovereign plan. It led Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy that the Messiah would be born in David’s city (Micah 5:2).

You won’t find bureaucracy on a Christmas card, but when you see the manger, remember what it points to: a God whose plans surpass the powers of the day. Within three centuries, the Roman emperor would be a Christian. God’s unseen hand works even through the pens of powerful people to write history – *His* story.

Prayer

Lord, thank You that Your plans unfold even through ordinary events. When it’s easy to be fearful, help me to trust in Your quiet but sovereign work in my life, today and every day. Amen.

DAY 6

Psalms 139:6-14

The wonderful art of knitting

My mum and dad have been trying to build a connection with the young couple next door to them. When their baby boy was born prematurely, mum knitted a beautiful little cardigan for him. That simple, thoughtful gift created a meaningful bond.

Knitting is the art of looping one strand over and over until something beautiful takes shape. The psalmist uses this image to describe how we are ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’ (Psalm 139). Today, we understand even more of the complexity and wonder of that inner process – the delicate relationship between a forming child and its mother, one entirely dependent on the other.

This tells us something profound about God’s plan. The child in the manger reveals a God who chose to enter the world through the vulnerability of childbirth. He submitted to a nine-month biological process, arriving at just the right time. Jesus, like us, was fearfully and wonderfully made.

At Christmas, we meet a God who is willing to make Himself vulnerable so that he makes a connection with us – weaving His life into ours.

Prayer

Lord, like a neighbour reaching out in love to make a connection, in Jesus, You've become one of us, your plan being revealed through One who serves us. May I be willing to make myself vulnerable as I reach out and share You with those around me. Amen.



DAY 7

Isaiah 11:1-10

Small beginning, wonderful ending

Today, we're offered the chance to celebrate the miraculous growth of the kingdom of God.

In verse 1, the royal line of David, Jesse's son, was in such a poor state that it looked like it'd been cut down to a lifeless stump. But from this stump, tiny growth in the form of a shoot begins. This is truly a 'small wonder' beginning. This wonderful growth appears fragile but is totally dependable, because the Spirit of the Lord rests there.

By the end of our reading, in verses 9 and 10, the tiniest of starts has grown to become the biggest of hopes. From a shoot on a stump, looking hopeless, we have the promise of the whole Earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord and a banner to which all nations rally.

There's a visual parallel of this in Britain today, with literal shoots appearing from the base of the Sycamore Gap tree in Hadrian's Wall, felled in an act of vandalism in September 2023. There are also multiple art and replanting projects happening to turn this tragic story into something hopeful.

Today, we're reminded of the wonderful news of growth and hope that begins with Jesus' birth and finds fulfilment in his return. In the meantime, our God is still in the turnaround business. He still creates good news stories from bad and still creates growth where it looks impossible. And today, we are invited to play our part in His transformation work, and to be His messengers of hope.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for this beautiful picture and promise of growth and transformation.

Whatever I face today, in everyday situations which seem to bear little or no hope, help me to remember Your power to transform. Show me where I can be Your agent for transformation today.

DAY 8

Genesis 3:8-15

Where are you?

Genesis 3 feels neither Christmassy nor wonderful. But to truly appreciate the wonderful news of the rescue that came through Jesus, we need to first consider the desperate and disastrous news without Him.

Today's passage sets out the consequences of the first sin and points to a pattern of sin ever since. We see disobedience to God, followed by hiding and distance from Him, and blaming others. We also find the very first mention of fear as a direct result of their sin.

As we pray and reflect today, perhaps we need the reminder that, whatever we're facing with colleagues, customers, friends, family, or strangers, sin always has consequences. There are always ripple effects to sin, creating distance between us and God.

But even here in this difficult passage, there is hope. There is measure in God's response, fairness in His judgement. God listens and shows love even when He has been let down. He takes the first step, asking 'Where are you?' Of course, it's not that He doesn't know or can't find Adam and Eve. It's that He's offering them an opportunity to respond and come back to Him.

Today, we have the wonderful news that our God extends that offer to respond and come back to Him. The invitation to return is restored through Jesus. At this very moment, we can prayerfully invite God to walk with us throughout our day, in every place, in our everyday work, leisure, and rest. No hiding.

Prayer

Lord, I need Your forgiveness today. Prayerfully, carefully, and gratefully, I ask for the new start and restored relationship You offer. I'm so thankful for Your promise to be with me in all I face. Help me not to play the pointless game of trying to hide any part of my life from You, but to welcome Your offer to walk with me.

DAY 9

Hebrews 1:1-6

Beyond compare

The small wonder of Jesus coming to Earth isn't the first way God speaks to His people, but it is clearer than anything that's gone before. The letter to the Hebrews has a clear agenda – to set out the uniqueness of Christ, especially for a Jewish audience. The writer wastes no time, jumping in with a comparison of God's communication before and after Jesus' arrival.

Make no mistake, the previous revelations of God in the Old Testament were authentic, but the personal revelation in Jesus is even more authentic and superior. As St Augustine put it when comparing the Old and New Testaments, 'The New is in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed.'

The word *superior* in verse 4 is a deliberate and repeated theme throughout the letter, as the writer celebrates Jesus as God, Creator, Sustainer, Priest, and King. Many Jews had a particularly high view of angels, hence the writer specifically pointing out Jesus' superiority to all angels in every way.

This is the wonder in the smallness of the Christ-child – that in Him, we get a richer, deeper, fuller, closer picture of who God is, and how He loves us. Today, whatever we're facing, we know that the One who brought that superior clarity also purifies us from our sins and sustains us.

Prayer

Lord, wherever I find myself today and this Christmas season, may I carry a fresh sense of wonder for Jesus, the Maker and Sustainer of all things, the bright light of Your glory, the only one who can offer purification for my sins. May others notice this spark of thankfulness and wonder in me.

DAY 10

Isaiah 9:1-7

Names fit for a King

Often, in South Asian cultures, new monarchs were given 'throne names' to celebrate their reign and to describe their attributes. For example, Prince Khurram, the builder of the Taj Mahal, was given the throne name Shah Jahan – or 'King of the World'. Today, we celebrate that Jesus, the true King of the

World, is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

We often think of the name ‘Wonderful Counsellor’ (Isaiah 9:6) as a description of what Jesus offers to us. There is, of course, a much-needed truth to that. Whatever we’re facing today, at work, at home, with family, or elsewhere, we can call on His counsel, advice, and promise to come alongside us. His counsel won’t just be adequate – it will be *wonderful*.

But this name for Jesus is firstly a description of His ability to reign as King. Much like today, kings in Isaiah’s time needed wise counsellors to stand alongside them in the court and advise on how they should rule. Plenty of these ‘wise counsellors’ weren’t so wise and encouraged their leaders to make disastrous decisions! But Jesus already possesses the wisdom He needs to reign – and to do so wonderfully.

Today, we give thanks that our Saviour offers wonderful counsel to us through His Spirit, His word, and His people – and that He also reigns as the Wonderful Counsellor.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the hope announced throughout today's reading, for the light and joy that is promised. Thank You that You reign as the Wonderful Counsellor, and that I can call on Your wonderful counsel. I take a moment now to ask for Your guidance and wisdom on the things I'm facing today.

DAY 11

Matthew 1:18-24

Costly trust

During Advent, we celebrate the wonderful news of Immanuel, God with us. But it didn't seem such wonderful news to Joseph at first.

Mary, Joseph's fiancée, is found to be pregnant. Joseph, who consistently seeks to do the right thing, even if he may get the opposite reputation, has plans for a quiet divorce. At the time, the stages towards marriage meant Joseph could already be referred to as her husband – their engagement was legally binding, with divorce being the only way to end it.

Later, Joseph hears personally from an angel, and having heard the news himself, he knows Mary is far from unfaithful. She is being obedient to God. Joseph, once again, responds by prioritising right action over

reputation. In the end, his actions form an essential part of the wonderful news for all of us.

Joseph provides helpful challenges that might be poignant for some today. How do we respond to unexpected or unwanted news in our daily lives? This is so often a key test of our character and our priorities. Joseph always tried to respond in the right way.

As the story unfolds, we have proof that we can trust God beyond our immediate circumstances. You might find it helpful to listen to the song 'Before' by Boundless to reflect on this aspect of trusting God before we receive the news we seek, trusting in him in every unknown.

Prayer

Lord, whatever comes my way today, help me to learn from Joseph. Help me to trust in You. Whenever there is a tension between good reputation and good actions, help me to prioritise the latter.

DAY 12

Romans 1:1-5

Anointed King, priest, and prophet

Have you ever noticed how today we usually say 'Jesus Christ', but Paul often uses the inverse order – 'Christ Jesus'?

'Christ' is a title, not a name, and Paul places it first for emphasis. It's the Greek form of the Hebrew word 'Messiah', meaning 'anointed one'. In the culture of the time, key people such as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed – marked on the forehead with oil – to signify that they were being set aside for a special task. Today, we give thanks that Jesus is all three – King, Priest, and Prophet – and that no task is more significant than his rescue mission to Earth.

Paul kicks off this letter repeating the word 'gospel', meaning 'good news', for emphasis. The good news available through this anointed one, Jesus, impacts the whole of our lives. The wonderful news that was promised in the Old Testament is delivered and fulfilled in Jesus. As Paul will go on to say in this letter, our response should not just be thankfulness for our personal salvation but offering the whole of our lives as a worshipful response to Him (Romans 12:1–2).

Of course, no task will ever be as special as the anointed tasks and rescue mission of Christ Jesus, but all our everyday tasks have extra meaning and purpose because of Him. Today, we are wonderfully tasked with working (paid or unpaid) to the best of our ability in a way that represents our Saviour well.

Prayer

Christ Jesus, anointed King, Priest, and Prophet, as I consider You today, help me to carry a sense of wonder and thankfulness in all I do. Whatever comes up today, help me to represent You well.

DAY 13

Isaiah 52:7-8

Beautiful feet

When you think about it, an all-terrain trekker who's been traversing across mountains at speed in a hot climate to bring announcements might not have the most beautiful-looking feet!

After all, how many people's feet are beautiful anyway?

The feet described here aren't beautiful due to their appearance. They're beautiful because of the message they bring. They bring good news.

In these verses, we have two forms of early announcements – firstly, the runner who crosses mountains first to tell the people that God has saved them, and secondly, the watchmen at the city walls who are first to see the victory procession as the Lord returns.

The beautiful, wonderful, good news they announce has three parts: peace, salvation, and God's reign. And there are at least three stages to it being fulfilled – first with the return of the exiles to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple there, then second with the arrival of Jesus.

The third stage of the fulfilment of this good news is yet to come. We have so much good news to celebrate at Christmas, but we also clearly aren't seeing all the good news described here. Most days, our everyday contexts are far from complete expressions of peace, for example. Throughout Advent, whilst celebrating Jesus' coming to Earth, we also eagerly wait for His return to rule.

Prayer

Lord, wherever my feet take me today, help my words and deeds to convey Your good news. Whilst we wait for Your Kingdom to fully come, we ask for more of Your peace on Earth and more people to experience Your beautiful salvation – including those we're closest to every day.



DAY 14

Psalms 146:1-10

The cosmic, personal God

God's wonderful work is broadcast across the land and skies. From the glorious constellations of the

universe to the tiny details of the pattern on a starfish, His abundant creation points to His wonderful work.

In this psalm, we read how God's concern is both cosmic and personal. His wonderful work doesn't stop at the point of creation; it continues in the care He shows for all he's made. It is wonderfully displayed in His concern for His people, in love and affection for those who cannot earn it. What an inspiration to worship!

The writer also reminds his audience not to trust in princes, as they do not have ultimate power – and sometimes have no inclination to save others. We, too, should not put too much trust in earthly leaders, no matter how powerful or kind they look. Often, those in powerful positions overlook people when they cease to be of value to them, whatever that means in the circumstances.

God's promise is that He will not discard us, but rather care for us in our weaknesses. He invites us to be people who echo his character and, in the same way, care for people without expectation of return.

As we look towards Jesus' coming this Advent, let's remember that as we wait for Him, we are invited to

join in His wonderful work of creation and care, praising Him for the model He has set for us.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for Your amazing creativity. Thank You that You made this beautiful world for us to live in and that You continue to care for it. Please help me to play my part in caring for Your creation and Your people today. Open my eyes to the opportunities in front of me and give me courage to take them. Amen.

DAY 15

Luke 1:26-35

Luke 1:38

Wondering about the smallest thing

The story of Jesus' conception is wild. Some theologians argue that in this moment, the world is saved. From this moment, in this single cell, divinity and humanity are united. The plan is in motion. The work of incarnation has been completed, and the work of salvation begun.

Mary's immediate response to the angel is concern and wonder. She's not sure what's coming. Throughout the Old Testament, the appearance of

angels has heralded both God's good plan and significant disruption for the person they're appearing to. What has God got planned for her?

What a message it is to receive, to wonder and ponder over. God favours her and His favour will bring her a son – who is God's own Son. Babies are so small when they start out, and yet this baby once held the stars in His hands. So small, but on course to shape human history. The infinite contained in an infant.

Like Mary, we sometimes find God's good plans disrupt our plans. They can mean a change of direction, a change of circumstances, and, sometimes, even rejection by those we care about. Sometimes we underestimate the scale of God's plan, the impact that He'll have through us, through the work we do every day, through the people we influence, through the cultures we shape.

Can you find some time today to wonder at what God is doing in and around you? Pause and reflect on His wonderful plans.

Prayer

Jesus, sometimes I'm surprised by the plans You have for me. As I pause today, help me to see Your plans and promises in my life. Help me to be grateful for

Your goodness and to trust that You have a plan when I don't see it. Amen.

DAY 16

Philippians 2:5-7

Servant God

Jesus shows us what it is like to be truly and beautifully human. In this passage, we're invited to live the way of Jesus in our everyday lives, shaped by principles that demonstrate His love. We can all serve others in a way that reflects the generosity of God.

Paul encourages the church to have the same attitude as Jesus, to learn to think as he did, and in doing so to learn to live radical lives of love. We are to be people who care for each other, who choose love over power, service over comfort, and others over ourselves. We all have opportunities to put ourselves first, and we also have myriad opportunities to serve those around us.

That might simply be taking time to message someone to see how they are, blessing someone with the gift of a phone call, a letter, or a quick DM to let them know you care. It might be more life-changing, choosing to invest in a junior colleague, encouraging

the students in your class, or going above and beyond to make a client's business flourish. It might be doing something that no one else wants to do, cleaning the bins or tidying up the alleyway behind your flat.

Today, why not take the opportunity to recognise the privilege you have, however small it might look in comparison to others, and choose to lay that down to serve someone else?

Prayer

Father God, please help me to be more like Your Son, Jesus. Help me to use what You have given me today to serve others. Open my eyes to see what and who is in front of me as I follow You today. Amen.

DAY 17

Psalms 9:1-2

Wonderful deeds

God's wonderful deeds are beyond description, more numerous and marvellous than any of us can hear or record in our lifetime. After writing 21 chapters of the events of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the Gospel writer John makes clear that he's only recorded a small portion of the wonderful works of God. He ends his Gospel by saying, 'Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written

down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written' (John 21:25). What a wonderful statement!

We, as the church, have so many accounts of God's wonderful acts towards us and through us, as He chooses to work out His purposes through the lives of His people. As well as the Bible, we have access to podcasts, sermons, books, and other resources that point us to Jesus. All around us are stories of God's good and wonderful works, works that we get to join in with.

In a world filled with bad news stories, we are people of good news. The narratives we dwell on shape our lives. What stories do you have of God's wonderful deeds, both from Scripture and your life? What stories can you tell yourself and others of God's wonderful deeds today?

Prayer

Lord God, please help me to be a person of praise today as I reflect on Your many wonderful deeds. Give me courage and opportunity to share about You with people I meet today. Amen.

DAY 18

1 Peter 2:9-10

Wonderful light

You are chosen. How does that sit with you? Take a moment to recognise the feelings this passage evokes in you and bring them before God. It's hard to get your head around the mercy and wonder of being chosen by God. He's always ready to hear how we feel about that, both the delight and the harder feelings it may evoke.

As you come to prayer today, bring your experiences to God – times you've been welcomed or excluded, times you've felt seen or overlooked, others when you've been recognised for who you are, and those times you've been misunderstood. Those experiences have left us with a whole load of feelings, but they don't define who we are – God does.

This passage reminds us that God Himself has chosen us to be His people. To work out His plans in the world, to reflect His wonderful light into the places where we live, work, and play. To be people who live and work to declare His praise and to bring him glory. People who lead others in praise and who

stand between God and others to show them the way to Him.

When you think about what your day involves, what does it look like to live as a person called out of darkness in God's 'wonderful light'? How does that impact your work, your mental health, and your relationships?

Prayer

Father God, thank You that You have chosen me. Thank You that You have brought me into Your wonderful light. Help me to remember my identity in You, and to let that identity shape all that I do. Amen.

DAY 19

Philippians 2:14-16

Be a star to follow

The Magi noticed something different in the sky. Something unusual. Something out of the ordinary – and following it led them to the most wonderful encounter.

Likewise, Paul encourages us to 'shine like stars in the sky'. To live differently to those around us. To be something different, unusual, out of the ordinary. We

can stand out by the way we live, and in doing so help people to find their way to Jesus. As we hold firmly to the word of life, the Word that is Jesus, we can't help but let people see some of His life flowing through us.

'Do everything without grumbling or arguing.' What a line! Incredibly simple and yet extremely challenging. It's not the way of the world we live in. To live like children of God in this world is a real statement. Not complaining that the world doesn't revolve around us or that we don't always get our way, remaining 'blameless and pure' in the face of disappointment and challenge. It's not what people expect.

As in yesterday's passage, we are called to bring light in dark places. To shine like stars, pointing to Jesus just like that first star did 2,000 years ago.

What does 'holding firmly to the word of life' look like for you this week? Where are you most vulnerable to grumbling or arguing? Invite God to come and help you become blameless and pure in this area.

Prayer

Father, I know that there are plenty of days when I grumble and argue. Please forgive me when I get it wrong. Please help me to shine like a star for You so that others will find the way to Jesus. Amen.

DAY 20

1 Peter 3:14-16

Wonderful reasons

Have you ever had someone ask you why you're so happy or so kind – and felt uncomfortable about it, or been unable to give an answer? Often these questions come out of the blue, when we're not expecting them.

Every day, we meet people who don't know Jesus. They live on our streets, in our blocks, and in some of our homes. We work with them, laugh with them, and walk past them on the street. People wonderfully made in the image of God, yet to know the joy of His love, the hope of His presence, and the peace of His kindness. The very people Jesus came to Earth to save. When these people see us, they have an opportunity to see something of the love of God, if only we let them see His love in our actions.

1 Peter encourages us to prepare to give an answer, gently, respectfully, and with integrity. You've taken time to read and pray today, so why not take a couple of minutes to reflect on the reasons you have for your hope? How many can you list? Some may be small, insignificant to others, but important to you; others

might be the kind of cosmic realities that we know through the life of Jesus.

Is there a person in your life that you'd like to share this hope with?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, inspire my mind and my thoughts so that when people ask me to explain the hope I have, or the joy I have, or the reason I do something kind, my thoughts turn to You. Help me to give good answers, point to You, and share my story of hope with the people on my heart and the people I meet. Amen.



DAY 21

Isaiah 7:10-16

Immanuel

God speaks to Ahaz and tells him to ask for a sign, in the deepest depths or the highest heights. The offer is huge! 'Ask for any sign and I will show you.'

Ahaz says he doesn't need a sign, but God gives him one anyway. Not something written across the sky (although it will be) or hidden in the depths (although He will grow in the darkness of the womb) – but something almost missable: a child. Born like other babies, to grow to adulthood like other babies, but not entirely like other babies. Born to a virgin, this baby is God Himself, the Lord of deepest depths and highest

heights, land and animals, God with us, *Immanuel*. A tiny person with a huge purpose. A small wonder.

God sent Isaiah to say to Ahaz, ‘Do not be afraid’. That phrase is echoed in the angel's words to Mary. When God does something extraordinary, it can often leave us fearful, feeling out of control. Where is the comfort? It’s in the person of Jesus.

When you look at the days ahead, where do you need to know God is with you?

Prayer

Jesus, Immanuel, thank You for choosing to come and be with us. As I look ahead to all that’s coming today, I need to know You are with me. Help me to hear Your voice again, saying, ‘Do not be afraid’ – and to trust You for all the challenges I face. Amen.

DAY 22

Luke 1:39-56

The wonder of meeting

Mary comes to a house she’s likely familiar with – the home of her cousin Elizabeth. But what happens is so unfamiliar that they shout their surprise and wonder out loud. At Mary’s greeting, Elizabeth’s child leaps

inside her womb, and she's filled with the Holy Spirit. Ordinary space has become sacred. Everyday life for these women is suddenly charged with divine possibility.

Most family visits are full of the familiar, full of repeating patterns, greetings, and partings, predictable rhythms. This family visit is different. Elizabeth recognises that the Holy Spirit is at work, she calls Mary 'mother of my Lord', and Mary breaks into prophetic song. God's justice, abundance, and mercy are proclaimed, all because of this small wonder, the infant in Mary's womb. These women could be so easy to overlook, but instead have become key figures in the story of salvation.

As you spend time in familiar places and with familiar people, where do you notice the Holy Spirit at work? Do you notice God's hand in the place where you'll find yourself today?

Like Mary and Elizabeth, may we cultivate wonder at what God is doing. May it turn to praise as we declare what God has done, is doing, and will do, speaking out the wonder of His works until every corner of life echoes with the joy of His coming kingdom.

Prayer

Father God, please help me to notice where the Spirit is at work and to turn to praise. Let my thoughts focus on Your wonderful works and all that You have done for me and for Your people. Amen.

DAY 23

Luke 3:15

Disappointment and wondering

Advent is a season of waiting. Not all waiting is hopeful. Some of it is weary.

God's people had waited through centuries of silence and oppression. They had known disappointment, promises unfulfilled, prayers unanswered. So when John appears in the wilderness, stirring hearts and baptising with authority, something fragile begins to rise: a small wonder. *Could this finally be it?*

They came out to the desert and lives were changed, even tax collectors and soldiers came to him in hope. And though John wasn't the messiah, he helpfully prepared the way – because when Jesus the Messiah *did* come, it wasn't in the way they expected.

There are moments in life when we think we've finally got all we were hoping for – that job, that relationship, that house – but after a while, those things turn out to be not quite all that. Two months in, our new colleagues aren't as shiny as they looked from the outside, the new relationship hits its first argument, or the house that looked beautiful in summer is drafty in the winter.

Advent reminds us that even in disappointment, God is still at work. Disappointment is not the end of the story. Keep hoping. Keep wondering as you look for God's hands at work in the world.

Prayer

God of the waiting and the wondering, You know the weight of disappointments I carry. You know how hard it can be to hope again. Kindle in me a small wonder, brave enough to believe You may still be at work. Teach me to lean in, to listen, to wait – even when my heart is tired. Amen.

DAY 24

Matthew 2:1-12

Wandering and wondering

Have you ever been on a long journey, headed towards something you've been longing for, not quite knowing what you'll find, wondering what lies ahead?

Maybe it's the hope of a new job, healing in a relationship, or simply making it through this season with your head above water. We all have longings that move us, quiet hopes we carry even when the road feels uncertain, things we wonder about when the noise quietens and we slip into a reflective mode.

The Magi followed a star, not knowing exactly where it would lead. How they must have wondered and talked as they travelled – wise people sharing great ideas. They went to the most logical place – a palace – but didn't find the King they were looking for. So they kept following and found Him, just a child in a house with His mother. Nothing flashy. No grand setting. And there, they knelt in worship.

This is how God often meets us: not in the extraordinary, but in the ordinary. In the small moments. Not always in the places we expect, but

wonderfully in the mundane, and not always in the places where we first looked.

Prayer

Jesus, as I approach Christmas Day and stand on the eve of this moment, help me to keep looking to You and searching for You. When I find quiet moments in these next few days, keep drawing me towards wonder and worship, because You are truly marvellous. Amen.

DAY 25

John 1:1-14

Wonder that brings answers

Happy Christmas! This Christmas Day, may you find time for wonder as you contemplate our Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Today we celebrate the One who existed before the beginning of the world, who nevertheless accepted this small, wonderful beginning on earth – who took on flesh and become one of us.

This passage describes Jesus as both the Word and the Light. In other words, He is the eternal Creator

God and source of life, and He provides the light in the darkness that we all need.

Whenever we contemplate these things, there will always be some elements beyond our understanding – things which cause us to wonder. After all, we are talking about the One through whom all things were made! Wonder, in that sense, is part of the deal until Christ returns. We could even say it's no wonder there'll always be some things to wonder about.

But because Jesus came to us, I no longer need to wonder about the things that matter most. I no longer need to wonder if God cares, if I matter to Him, if He understands what life is like, if I belong. More than that, I no longer need to wonder what His priorities are, what leadership should look like, or if I can be forgiven. I no longer need to wonder if there is purpose to my life and my work. And most importantly, today I can give thanks that I don't have to wonder what God is like.

I can have confident answers to all these things today (yes, with an element of wonder still there) because Jesus came, taught, and demonstrated the answers for all these questions and more.

Prayer

Lord, thank You that the small wonder we celebrate today is the greatest source of wonder for all of us, for tomorrow and beyond.

Looking back on this Advent journey, I ask You to prompt me on what I should remember beyond Christmas Day and continue to take strength from in the year ahead.