



Sterling

# Christmas

**BIBLE JOURNEY**

**JOURNEY TO  
BETHLEHEM**

**24-DAY DEVOTIONAL**

# Welcome

## TO THE CHRISTMAS BIBLE JOURNEY.

Over two thousand years ago, Joseph and a pregnant Mary made the arduous trip to Bethlehem. Together, they had to trust God as they faced the challenges ahead. Soon the King of kings and Lord of lords would be born in a humble stable. The story of Jesus' coming is a source of encouragement, comfort, and direction for us all.

Like Mary and Joseph, we are each called to trust in God through times of difficulty, uncertainty, and even suffering.

And although they did not know God's whole plan, they courageously obeyed Him.

As we remember Mary, Joseph, Jesus and others in the story of Advent, we are also encouraged to courageously embrace God and to obey him.

This Advent season, I welcome you to join me on a Bible journey to Bethlehem that I hope will inspire and encourage you!

Pastor Eddy Barnes,  
*Lead Pastor,*  
*Grace Covenant Church Sterling*

# DAY ONE

John 1:1-5

*A*t Advent, we have the opportunity to remember Jesus. Unlike the gospel narratives of Matthew and Luke, which point to the beginning of Jesus's life on earth, John reminds us of the ultimate beginning—the beginning of all things.

John tells us that the Word (a title he uses to describe Jesus), was with God and was God, in the beginning. In other words, before the story of creation, Jesus was with God the Father, and Jesus is God. The story of Christmas is more than the story of a young couple, looking for lodging in a small town. It is the story of God himself entering into his own creation, humbling himself by taking on humanity — the vulnerable, dependent humanity of a baby.

You and I can celebrate Christmas, because when we remember Jesus, we remember that God has not left us alone in the dark. He is a shining light who was in the beginning and who will be with us in the end.

## PRAYER POINT

THANK GOD FOR SENDING HIS SON, JESUS, TO TAKE ON HUMAN FLESH AND BECOME LIKE US, SO THAT WE COULD SEE HIS LIGHT AND KNOW HIM.

# DAY TWO

Isaiah 9:2-7

**B**urdens! What a not-so-wonderful word! For most of us, this word carries a connotation of discomfort, stress, and pain. The weight of constantly making decisions about our family, our finances, and our futures is fatigue-inducing. But someone has to carry them! Who will manage the load, if we don't? While having responsibility and stewarding our lives will never go away, the heaviest obligation we shoulder has been removed from us forever.

In Isaiah, God promises that he will give to His Son (a child born for us) the government, responsibility, and dominion of over the oppressive burden of sin and its judgment, which hovers over our lives. His son's name is Jesus, our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. He will exchange our yoke of guilt and shame, with His burden of grace and peace that never ends. A yoke that is easy and a burden which is light (Matt. 28:30).

## PRAYER POINT

**PRAY TODAY FOR A RENEWED SENSE OF GOD'S PEACE, AS WE  
EXCHANGE OUR CARES FOR HIS GRACE.**

# DAY THREE

Isaiah 11:1-10

The story of Christmas does not begin with the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. In fact, the Advent season is a time to remember that God had planned to send Christ, the Chosen One of God, long ago. Even as early as Genesis 3, God promised that he would send one, who would make right the things that had gone wrong, because of Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

The One that God would send would be unique, special, chosen. He would be righteous and faithful to God. He would minister with the power of the Holy Spirit. He would bring justice for the meek and the poor. And He would usher in an era of peace in all creation — a peace founded on “the knowledge of the LORD.”

The Christmas story is an extension of the story of the person that Isaiah prophesied would come, The Chosen One of God, righteous, faithful, and just — He who would restore all things.

## PRAYER POINT

**PRAY TODAY FOR AREAS WHERE YOU NEED RESTORATION IN  
YOUR LIFE AND THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND YOU.**

# DAY FOUR

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Waiting is never easy. By nature, we are impatient people. Standing by, expecting someone or something to come along, which could change our lives forever, is an increasingly difficult “waiting room.” And, it only intensifies when the surrounding circumstances are problematic and demanding. This place of waiting, in exile, is where we find the Israelites, and they must have been wondering if God would ever fulfill His promises to them.

In this passage, God assures them that He will raise up a king and a priest in the line of King David, fulfilling His promise to His people. Eventually, He does so through His Son, Jesus Christ. The Father makes a powerful statement here, declaring that He is faithful, consistent, and a covenant-keeping God. If you’re in a “waiting room,” and wondering whether God’s promises are still true for you today, do not despair. God is with you and He does not change! “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken...”

## PRAYER POINT

ASK GOD FOR HELP TO BELIEVE IN HIM AND TRUST THAT HE  
IS A MAN OF HIS WORD.

# DAY FIVE

Luke 1:5-10

3 echariah and Elizabeth were two ordinary people used by God for an extraordinary purpose. Luke tells us that they both were righteous people who sought to obey God. Zechariah was a priest and diligently performed his duty. They loved each other and served God, even as they prayed for God to give them a baby. Elizabeth was unable to have a child. This was a painful reality for her, one that Zechariah prayed God would change.

God used these two ordinary people to prepare the way for His Son. As they lived an ordinary life and obeyed God, God prepared to change their lives forever. Soon he would turn their sadness into joy and fulfill their deepest desire.

## PRAYER POINT

**ASK GOD TO HELP YOU FAITHFULLY OBEY HIM IN THE ORDINARY THINGS OF LIFE AND THAT YOUR LIFE BE CHARACTERIZED, AS RIGHTEOUS AND BLAMELESS, AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR HIM.**

# DAY SIX

Luke 1:11-17

**B**ut the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard...” Although he was startled, those words must have been sweet music to the ears of Zechariah at that moment. Given his age and the sheer impossibility of producing a child with his barren wife after years of trying, the thought of God finally providing a child for them would have been mind-blowing. God heard the prayer of Zechariah, and He responded!

We don't have a record of Zechariah and Elizabeth complaining about their unfortunate circumstances or blaming God for their infertility. But, we do have this written testimony of their persistent petition to God to intervene. They provide for us a great example of how we should respond to adversity in our lives. We should approach God's throne of grace with confidence (Heb. 4:16). It's in this place that we find the answers we so desperately need.

## PRAYER POINT

**ASK GOD TODAY TO HELP YOU SEE HIM AS THE GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE - AND THAT YOU CAN APPROACH HIM WITH ANYTHING YOU NEED.**



# DAY SEVEN

Luke 1:18-25

3 Zechariah had been praying. He had prayed for his wife's infertility to be healed and for them to have a child. It is likely that he had been praying for a long time. Somewhere along the lines, did his prayers change from the eager desires of a man, who trusted his God, to half-hearted prayers of doubt? Maybe he had begun to doubt that God heard him or even cared about him.

When the angel told Zechariah that God had heard his prayers, Zechariah's first response was cynicism. He was face-to-face with a powerful angel who stood in the presence of God and whose job it was to give Zechariah this message. But Zechariah did not believe him. Because of his doubt, Zechariah temporarily lost the ability to speak, perhaps so that his unbelief wouldn't infect others.

It's not hard to get jaded. The good news is that God did not change his mind. God had heard Zechariah's prayers, and even his unbelief wouldn't sway God from blessing this couple. Elizabeth would have a baby. And Zechariah would praise his God.

## PRAYER POINT

ASK GOD FOR HIS GRACIOUSNESS TOWARD YOU IN YOUR MOMENTS OF DOUBT. THANK HIM FOR HIS GOODNESS ALL THE TIME. ASK HIM TO GIVE YOU GREATER FAITH TO TRUST HIM.

# DAY EIGHT

Luke 1:26-38

Mary was a teenage girl from a small town, Nazareth, that had a negative reputation throughout the region. She was engaged to a poor carpenter from the same village. Mary was not wealthy or well-educated. She was not famous or influential.

Mary was imperfect and relatively insignificant. Yet, God favored her, His presence was with her, and she was used by Him to transform humanity through the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Mary's story is incredible! She gained God's approval, not through her actions, but only because God reached down from Heaven, before the foundation of the world and put His grace upon her life. Mary didn't choose God! God chose Mary!

Her testimony is our testimony too! We don't deserve God's grace, nor can we earn His favor, yet He chose us in Christ. He is for us. He is with us. Nothing is impossible with our God!

## PRAYER POINT

**PRAY THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS UNMERITED FAVOR IN  
OUR LIVES THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST.**

# DAY NINE

Matthew 1:18-21

Mary and Joseph were two regular people. Joseph pursued Mary and now she was betrothed to him. They were on their way to a lovely marriage, when God's plan intersected theirs. Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant and knew that it was not his child. So, he planned to do what he must, divorce Mary, though he sought to do so in a way that would do the least harm to her.

But God intersected his life again, sending an angel, who let him in on the secret— this baby was from God! And this baby would be a savior!

God's plans intersected with Mary and Joseph's plans. And even though Mary and Joseph were two regular people, God would use them in an extraordinary way to bring blessing to all people.

## PRAYER POINT

THANK GOD THAT HE USES REGULAR PEOPLE TO DO HIS WILL.  
ASK HIM TO HELP YOU RESPOND FAITHFULLY AND OBEDIENTLY  
WHEN HIS PLANS INTERSECT WITH YOURS.

# DAY TEN

Matthew 1:22-25

Joseph finds himself in a confusing and challenging situation. His fiancé is not only pregnant, but it's God's baby. Can you imagine the intensity of those conversations between him and Mary? Joseph could have walked away from the messiness of this unfortunate circumstance. It would have alleviated all of his anxiety, fears, and pressures. But his perspective changed once God revealed the purpose behind this major life interruption.

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken..." was a game-changer for Joseph. God's word and intention transformed his outlook. God was up to something greater than Joseph could ever imagine. Once his viewpoint shifted, he could readily obey God's word to him and Mary.

Be encouraged today, especially if you're contemplating how to divorce yourself from an unpleasant season of life. God is always up to something. He's working all things for good, and ultimately giving birth to more of Jesus in your life! That's always a good thing - and our great perspective!

## PRAYER POINT

**ASK GOD FOR CLARITY IN HIS PURPOSE FOR YOU AND FOR EVERY SITUATION YOU'RE EXPERIENCING. PRAY FOR OTHERS YOU KNOW THAT ARE CURRENTLY FACING DIFFICULTIES.**

# DAY ELEVEN

Luke 1:39-45

After Mary received the extraordinary angelic report that she would be the mother of the Son of God, she went to visit her relative, Elizabeth, who was now pregnant despite her old age. The angel had told Mary that Elizabeth's pregnancy was confirmation of what God had promised to her.

Elizabeth confirmed the testimony of the angel, not only because she was pregnant, but also by her words to Mary: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" God was confirming His promise to Mary, through the lives of others in her life.

As we celebrate Advent, we have the privilege of being testimonies of what God has done through Jesus Christ. While we may not have the same miraculous experience that Elizabeth had, we can tell our friends, family, and neighbors of how blessed Mary was, and how her child would be a blessing to the world.

## PRAYER POINT

LET YOUR LIFE SERVE AS A TESTIMONY OF GOD'S GOODNESS  
AND FAITHFULNESS TO HUMANITY. ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU  
OPPORTUNITIES TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT WHAT HE HAS DONE  
IN JESUS CHRIST.

# DAY TWELVE

Luke 1: 46-56

Mary's hymn of praise is awe-inspiring. She leaves no stone unturned as she describes God's character and ability. God is her Savior. He's mighty and holy! He's merciful and strong! He cares about the marginalized and the oppressed! God is a covenant-keeping God and is forever faithful to the promises in His word! He's truly worthy of being praised!

But don't miss the immediate context of Mary's praise break. She had just received a timely and encouraging word of blessing from her cousin, Elizabeth. When Mary's world was turned upside down, God led her to a person of faith that stirred up a fresh awakening in her soul.

Don't spend this Christmas season alone. Pursue an authentic biblical community that will push you toward the presence of God and all He has to offer. Join a small group, participate in a Bible study, or maybe connect with a close friend over coffee. Like Mary, then may the eyes of your heart be opened to the glory of your Savior.

## PRAYER POINT

**PRAY THAT GOD WOULD PRESENT DIVINE OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR YOU TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE  
SPIRITUAL FAMILY IN YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.**

# DAY THIRTEEN

Luke 2:1-5

People celebrate Christmas with a plethora of traditions — Santa and his elves, Christmas trees, bells and ornaments. It can be easy to forget that the Advent is a story wrapped up in history. Luke works hard to let us know the setting of the story of Christmas.

As he reports, Joseph and Mary were traveling to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem to be part of a census.

Luke shows us that Jesus came into the world under humble circumstances. There was no marching band or grand coronation for a king. Joseph and Mary did not travel to Rome to deliver the next great Caesar. No, Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, the humble town of King David, the place of prophecy — and a place of promise.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord, we may be encouraged to remember that God is willing to enter into our humble circumstances. And we can remember that although some aspects of Christmas are fanciful or fictional, our faith rests on the birth of Christ, which was incredibly and historically real.

## PRAYER POINT

**THANK GOD THAT HE ENTERED INTO HUMAN HISTORY TO  
ESTABLISH OUR SALVATION IN THE VERY REAL LIFE OF HIS  
SON, JESUS CHRIST.**

# DAY FOURTEEN

Luke 2:6-7

Jesus is the all-knowing, all-powerful King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the Creator of everything. Jesus is God! He could have stepped into humanity as Superman. Yet, He introduced himself to us as a helpless newborn baby.

And talk about humble beginnings! He was born more like a peasant than a king. His castle was a stable, and his crib was a horse trough. It's not the entrance anyone would have envisioned for a Savior. Nevertheless, God's ways are much higher than our ways!

From the very beginning of Jesus' earthly story and ministry, God creates a seismic shift in our understanding of king and kingdom. His kingdom is spiritual, not material. It's eternal, not temporal. His great Sermon on the Mount reinforces that truth, as Jesus begins with this statement in Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Let's shift our focus today away from the things our world treasures and place our attention on the things our God values.

## PRAYER POINT

**PRAY FOR AN INCREASED HUNGER FOR GOD'S WORD AND TO  
HELP YOU LAY ASIDE ANYTHING THAT WOULD DISTRACT YOU  
FROM HIS PRESENCE.**



# DAY FIFTEEN

Luke 2:8-12

During Christmastime, nativity scenes often depict shepherds gathered around Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. It is worth noting that according to Luke's Gospel, God chose shepherds to be the first recipients of the good news that a savior had been born.

Why shepherds? Why not government officials or world leaders?

Why these dirty, ceremonially unclean men in the wilderness?

Perhaps God was preparing the way for those on the margins of the society to be the first to hear the good news of God's salvation. Consider the words Jesus would later say in Matthew 20:16, "the last will be first and the first will be last."

On this momentous night, God was inviting those who had been cast out to be the first to witness the glorious reality that God was entering his own creation as a baby, who would be the savior of the world.

## PRAYER POINT

THANK GOD THAT HE OFFERS SALVATION AND ETERNAL LIFE TO  
ALL WHO WOULD COME, ESPECIALLY THE LOWLY, THE POOR,  
AND THE OUTCAST.

# DAY SIXTEEN

Luke 2:13-14

It's a rare occurrence in the Bible, when God suddenly and supernaturally enters the scene. The angel's sudden appearance to the shepherds in the field was truly significant. Jesus' birth was such a momentous occasion that Heaven couldn't restrain its excitement. The doors of God's exuberant house party swing open, and we get a glimpse of Heaven's reaction.

The angelic multitude is singing loudly, praising Jesus, declaring His divinity, and describing His ministry. All who were enemies of God can now attain peace through His son, Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God is near, and salvation has come for all who would believe.

This fresh outpouring of praise from Heaven should inform our own response to God's presence in our lives. Let us begin to worship our God, who is truly worthy of praise. As we lift Him up, the peace of Christ, which transcends all understanding, will be our experience this Christmas season.

## PRAYER POINT

**TAKE A MOMENT TODAY TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH GOD IN WORSHIP. AS YOU WORSHIP, ASK GOD FOR A GREATER SENSE OF HIS PEACE IN YOUR LIFE.**

# DAY SEVENTEEN

Luke 2:15-18

That an amazing thing the shepherds had just experienced! They were witnesses to angels, messengers of heaven. First it was just one announcing the coming of the Savior, and then a multitude of angels appeared, praising God and singing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Can you imagine the overwhelming nature of this supernatural experience? They had heard the good news that Jesus was born in a nearby village by a chorus of angelic beings! With an experience like that, you and I might be tempted to revel in the moment. But in an expression of guileless faith, these shepherds quickly travel to Bethlehem to see the baby.

And there, they see the real miracle wrapped in absolute ordinary life — a little baby swaddled up and lying in a manger. But this moment represented the most extraordinary reality of all of existence! God had come to dwell with us!

## PRAYER POINT

THANK GOD FOR HIS PRESENCE IN THE ORDINARY MOMENTS OF  
YOUR LIFE AND FOR HIS SON, WHOSE LIFE IS THE  
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING THE ORDINARY FOR YOUR GOOD.

Luke 2:19-20

In this moment, we find a beautiful expression of a mother's love, after giving birth. As Christian parents, we partner with God and are deeply aware that our children are gifts from God. Mary rejoiced in her child's birth, but she was also consciously aware of his mission. Can you just imagine Mary's expectations for her son's life? She pondered this heavily in her heart and mind. At the time of Jesus' birth, Mary likely did not fully comprehend the magnitude of what had been prophesied for His life. Yet she received it in faith, trusted God, and waited patiently until it would be made clearer.

In this unusual time, many parents are experiencing anxiety and worry about their children — about their health, their education, and their future. To expel worry from our hearts, we must learn to trust God the way that Mary did. We must look back at God's faithfulness and His sovereign care, in order to trust Him, even in the midst of these unprecedented times.

## PRAYER POINT

**PRAY FOR GOD TO HELP YOU LIVE BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT,  
AND WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIS PLANS - JUST AS MARY DID.**

# DAY NINETEEN

Micah 5:2-5

Long before that night in Bethlehem, the prophet Micah prophesied that a ruler, who would bring peace for his people, would come from the city of David.

Ephrathah is the ancient name for the city of Bethlehem where King David was born. From that same city, another king would come who was from "ancient days," and who would shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord.

Jesus is both the good Shepherd and our great King. Just as his birth joined the human and divine nature in a single person, so also His purposes, as shepherd and king, were joined in a single person. We celebrate Christmas because we have a Savior who rules and reigns, and also guards and protects.

## PRAYER POINT

**THANK GOD FOR SENDING HIS SON TO BE OUR GREAT KING  
AND OUR GOOD SHEPHERD.**

# DAY TWENTY

Matthew 2:1-2

The Magi were men with varied interests in astrology, history, and magic, who sought all types of knowledge and revelation. Their search for the truth ultimately directed them toward the “king of the Jews.” It would seem that these men had read the Jewish Scriptures and were persistently looking for a clue that would lead to Him. Finally, God provided a sign, through a rising star, that signaled the fulfilling end of their search.

“Where is He? Where is the newborn King?” they asked with great expectation and with hearts prepared to worship. These “wise men” displayed a level of faith that few Jewish religious leaders expressed during that time.

Their story poses a few thought-provoking questions. Are we actively pursuing Jesus? Are we following the signs that would lead us to Him? And if so, what will we do when He reveals himself to us? Will we devote ourselves to Him?

The great news is, if you’re looking, seeking, or searching for answers, they can be found in Him. Jesus is the ultimate risen star and the light of the world. As you see Him more clearly, worship Him with your whole heart.

## PRAYER POINT

ASK GOD FOR WISDOM AND A FRESH REVELATION OF WHO HE IS.

# DAY TWENTY ONE

Matthew 2:3-6

*K*ing Herod overheard the chief priests and scribes talking about Jesus being born the King of the Jews, and he is troubled, because he feels a sense of threat to his throne. And these Jewish leaders were also distressed because Jesus would pose a threat to their corrupt religious and political leadership in Jerusalem. Matthew later describes Jesus as a ruler “who will shepherd my people.” What a contrast in the leadership character between Jesus and these other leaders!

We can easily get a sense that these other leaders were prideful and only thought about themselves and their own interests. In contrast, throughout the Bible, Jesus is referred to as a shepherd who gently and tenderly cares for each one of us — even when we wander.

We all desire to have someone who honestly cares for and deeply loves us. In all of our needs, concerns, and disappointments, this can be found when we look to the one who faithfully cares and loves us. During this Christmas season, let’s consider whether we are following our Shepherd, the One who has loved us so dearly that He died on the cross to save us.

## PRAYER POINT

**THANK YOUR GOOD SHEPHERD FOR HIS NEVERENDING  
FAITHFULNESS AND GENTLE, TENDER LOVING CARE.**

Matthew 2:7-8

Matthew tells of clear opposing intentions between the Magi and King Herod. On one hand, the Magi were convinced of the prophecy that the “King of the Jews” was born. They were excited to take a journey, following the star in the night sky, to honor and pay homage to Him. Their intentions were filled with veneration, wonder, and joy.

On the other hand, King Herod secretly tried to trick the Magi to return to him with information that could be used to find and kill Jesus. Herod perceived this newborn child to be his rival! His intentions were contaminated with pride, envy, and fear.

Rather than cooperating with the wicked Herod, the wise men slipped away, and an angel appeared to Joseph and warned him to flee Bethlehem.

When we find ourselves in the midst of adversity, or find it hard to figure out where our life is going, we also can count on our faithful God to be the guiding light that leads us. “Do not lean on your own understanding but acknowledge Him in all your ways and He will make your path straight to Him.” (Prov. 3:5-6)

# PRAYER POINT

**PRAY FOR GOD’S CHARACTER AND ATTRIBUTES TO SHINE  
GLORIOUSLY IN YOUR NIGHT SKY — AND BE YOUR GUIDING  
LIGHT.**



# DAY TWENTY THREE

Matthew 2:9-12

**T**he Magi's role in the story of Jesus' birth is astounding. Although they were pagans who wouldn't usually believe in the one true God of the Jews, their faith and trust in Jesus, the newborn king, should inspire us all. These men traveled, guided by a single star in the sky, searching for the Lord. When they found him, they immediately fell to their knees and worshipped in His presence. The Magi devoted not only their words, but they gave an offering of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus.

Their example demonstrates how we should seek after God and worship Him. When we are faced with the reality and presence of Jesus, our proper response is to recognize His holiness and honor Him. Paul says, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is our true and proper worship." (Rom. 12:1)

This Christmas, as we reflect on God's great gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Let's respond with true worship to God by offering over our lives.

## PRAYER POINT

**THANK GOD FOR HIS MERCY OFFERED THROUGH JESUS. ASK  
GOD TO HELP TO REMOVE ANY IDOLS PREVENTING YOU FROM  
FULLY DEVOTING YOUR LIFE TO HIM.**

## John 1:14

The first verse of John's gospel, he describes Jesus definitively, as the Word who was there in the beginning, who was with God, and who was God. These statements declare who He was, is, and always will be. As we continue reading chapter 1, John begins to explain the incarnation of the Word. He has always been God, but now He has become flesh. Herein lies the true reason for the season. Our Creator-God decided to step into humanity and dwell among us. It is the ultimate climax of the Christmas story!

There is no greater glory ever revealed to us than the person of Jesus. The only - begotten Son of God coming into the womb of a virgin, being born a baby, dressed in our fleshly limitations, experiencing our weaknesses, and laying down His perfect life to free us from our imperfections. Paul, in Ephesians 1:5, defines this as a "... glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

The celebration of Christmas is a great reminder of the expansive gift of God's free grace offered to us through Jesus Christ. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Consider Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" God's grace not only saves us but also is available to help us in every area of our lives.

This Christmas Eve, allow the grace of God through the truth of these Scriptures inspire you to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in spirit and truth, and to trust Him with your life.

# PRAYER POINT

**THANK GOD FOR THE GIFT OF GRACE THAT HE'S GIVEN TO YOU THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. ASK HIM INTO YOUR HEART IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY. PRAY THAT GOD WOULD HELP YOU TRUST HIM WITH EVERY PART OF YOUR LIFE.**

Thank you for joining us on a journey to Bethlehem.

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child.

# GRACE COVENANT CHURCH STERLING

## Administrative Office Address:

21631 Ridgetop Circle  
Suite #200  
Sterling, VA 20166  
703.444.2323

## Service Address:

@ Dominion High School  
21326 Augusta Drive  
Sterling, VA 20164  
10:00 am Sundays

[www.gracecov.org/sterling](http://www.gracecov.org/sterling)

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