



WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

4 week Advent series



‘A voice of one calling:
“In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill
made low;
the rough ground
shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord
will be revealed,
and all people will see
it together.
For the mouth of the Lord
has spoken.”’

- Isaiah 40:3-5 -

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Welcome to the silly season! Craziness, chaos, over-spending, angry carparks, long lines, unmet expectations... Have you ever thought, "Why bother with Christmas?" I acknowledge that this is a very Western, first world, consumeristic, description of Christmas - but for many of us, this is the Christmas world we battle with every year. And so it raises the question - if this is what Christmas is about, why bother?

In this Advent study, we are going to explore four reasons why we should bother with Christmas.

- Hope that changes our perspective
- Peace that provides comfort
- Joy that brings forth renewal
- Love that leads us to wonder

Hope is a vital way to start our Advent season, because a biblical worldview of hope sets for us an eternal perspective that is unshakable. For a Christian, even in the darkest places there is hope, because we have a God who sees us. We also have a God who knows us. We have an eternal future that is beyond our wildest dreams; one in which there is no more sickness or pain, everything is fully restored and whole. Just as it was meant to be from the start. But yes, sometimes (even at Christmas!), that really does feel a long way off! Come, Lord Jesus!

Advent is also a season in which we focus our attention on the fact that even if our eternal future feels like a long way off - God is still close by. He is certainly not distant from you or from me. He too desires that the beauty and majesty of heaven would consume the evils of this world. And so in this season we wait expectantly with him. Come, Lord Jesus!

May God's hope, peace, joy, and love fill your lives this Advent season as you focus your attention on Jesus - the One who is King of all and in control.

God bless you richly as you wait expectantly.

*Rev'd Scott Windred
Sunnybank Anglican*

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Week 1 Hope: Perspective

Warming up:

Is your personality typically a 'cup-half-empty' or a 'cup-half-full'?

Read: Isaiah 64:1-9

1. In v.1, does Isaiah feel that God is close by or far away? What is Isaiah asking God to do?
2. In vv.3-4, what is Isaiah remembering? Why?
3. In vv.5-7, Isaiah asks "how can we be saved?" Why is he asking this question? What is he aware of?
4. What is significant about v.8? What might Isaiah mean by using this illustration?
5. In v.9, what reason does Isaiah give for God to forgive them? What do you think about this reason?
6. In vv.10-11, Isaiah shares about his current circumstances. Can you relate to Isaiah in what you see around us today?
7. Why do you think Isaiah asks the questions in v.12?

Rubber hits the road: .

What is your response to the question, "how can we be saved?". How will the hope that you find in your Saviour Jesus change the way you live your life this week?

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Week 2 Peace: Comfort

Warming up:

What comforts you when you are upset? How do you comfort others when they are in need?

Read: Isaiah 40:1-11

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. What is the context of this passage? Why do God's people need comforting?
3. Why do you think Isaiah 40:3 is quoted at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Mark 1:3, Matt 3:3, Luke 3:4)? How is this verse comforting to God's people?
4. How does vv.6-8 challenge the way you view your relationship with God? But also provide comfort?
5. Isaiah 40 addresses three questions: Does God want to deliver us? Can He deliver us? Will He deliver us? How would you answer these question in the light of Jesus' birth and his coming again? And how is this a comfort to everyone?

Rubber hits the road:

How will the comfort and peace that you find in your Shepherd Jesus change the way you live your life this week? And how can you show this peace and comfort to someone?

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Week 3 Joy: Renewal

Warming up:

Have you ever had a relationship with a friend or family member that broke down? Have you then made up and renewed the friendship?

Read: Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. What kind of renewal is described in this passage?
3. What had Judah done to find themselves in this place with a rift between themselves and God?
4. How does this passage bring joy to the reader?
5. Jesus reads from this passage in the synagogue in Luke ch.4. what is he saying about himself?
6. How does the coming of Jesus mean joy and renewal for us both as individuals and as a community?

Rubber hits the road:

What are the rifts that exist between us and God? How can we use the Christmas message to always be conscious of the joy that our renewal through Jesus brings?

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Week 4 Love: Wonder

Warming up:

When was the last time you were filled with wonder? What happened and why was it so exciting?

Read: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

1. What did David want to do for God? What did God decide to do for David? What does this show us about God's love and grace?
2. How does Jesus' first coming fulfil God's promises in this passage? How will his second coming bring them to completion?

Read: Psalm 89:1-4; 18-27

1. What fills the Psalmist with awe and wonder in this passage? Why is it so significant that Jesus was called the 'Son of David'?

Read: Luke 1:26-38

1. Why do you think God sent an angel to Mary? What filled Mary with wonder?
2. What aspects of Mary's character most impress you?

Rubber hits the road:

How can we share the wonder of the Biblical story of Christmas with our friends and family this year?



Sunnybank
Anglican Church



HOLY SPIRIT
ALGESTON

Anglican
Church Dalby