

Holidays

Lord, Please grant your joy as we celebrate your birth. Amen.

Thanksgiving

OCTOBER 7, 2017

"For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you."

Deuteronomy 8:7-10

Fall is a season of harvest. May our lives bear many fruits! God has blessed us abundantly. Let us thank God for always blessing us and meeting our every need.

There are many things to be thankful for and many people to thank. When we live with a thankful heart, we will experience abundance in our lives.

Thank you, God, for meeting our needs every day. Thank you for taking care of us always. Amen.

Though the Fig Blossom Does not Blossom

OCTOBER 8, 2017

"Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines;
though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food;
though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no herd in the
stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my
salvation."

Habakkuk 3:17-18

We should be thankful for who God is and not for what God gives us.
Even during life's most difficult times, if God is with us, we will have
nothing to fear and worry about.

It is God who gives and also takes away. But ultimately, God will grant
us what we need the most. Let us be thankful in all circumstances.

*Lord, give me faith that allows me to be thankful in all circumstances.
Amen.*

Let it be With me According to Your Word

DECEMBER 16, 2017

"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The

Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her."

Luke 1:26-38

It was too difficult and absurd for Mary to accept the news that she would conceive a child since she was a virgin. Mary must have been scared. She probably wished that the message never came to her. Mary would have wanted to live an ordinary life like any other girls of her age.

Even though the message brought fearful reality, Mary accepted the message and let the Word be fulfilled. This was Mary's faith.

Through her faith, the Saviour was born to this world.

Lord, thank you for Mary's faith and courage. Please give me courage to live by your Word. Amen

My Soul Magnifies The Lord

DECEMBER 17, 2017

"And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.' And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home."

Luke 1:46-56

When Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she heard the message that came from her womb. She knew what her child would do when he was born in this world.

God scattered the proud, brought down the powerful, and sent the rich away empty. He lifted up the lowly and filled the hungry with good things.

Mary had a very different idea from the idea of the world. She also knew that her son would fulfill exactly what she imagined.

Lord, may I not follow the world, but help me to follow Jesus. Amen

We Live By God's Grace

DECEMBER 17, 2017

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbours, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Luke 1:57-66

Because he didn't believe, Zechariah, he became mute, unable to speak. But by God's grace, he was able to speak again. It was God's grace that he was able to have a son and also it was by God's grace that he was able to speak.

Our life gets untangled not by our own efforts but it is God's grace that opens up our life. Understanding this is the wisdom of life.

Lord, I present my life in your hands. I trust that you will lead my life by your grace. Amen

We Live By God's Plan

DECEMBER 19, 2017

"Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel."

Luke 1:67-80

It was in God's plan that Jesus came to this world. There was already a movement before Jesus was born. God prepared John the Baptist and God revealed God's plan to John.

Our life does not just happen. Our life proceeds by God's plan. We think we make our life by our short-sighted decisions but that is not true; there is God's plan that controls our life.

Let us be humble!

God who leads my life, help me to be obedient to your plan and your movement. Amen

There Was No Place

DECEMBER 20, 2017

"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

Luke 2:1-7

He created the world and sustains it. But when he came to this world, there was no place for him to stay. The world was not ready to receive him.

Do we have a place in our hearts for him to stay? Are we ready to receive him?

Lord, there are so many things in my heart. Help me to clean my heart during this Christmas season so that I may have a place for you. Amen

Glorious Night

DECEMBER 21, 2017

"In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them."

Luke 2:8-20

It was a cold and boring night. The shepherds could not stay in their warm houses with their families; they had to stay in the field again, tending the sheep. As they spent another night in the field, they experienced the monotony and the tediousness of life.

The birth of Jesus took them into a different world. They saw the glory. Their dull night turned into a glorious night. They might have continued to live as shepherds, but they would never forget this night. Their life was no longer a boring and monotonous life but a life filled with glory and praise.

That was the purpose of Jesus' birth.

Lord, our life is dull and meaningless without you. We believe that with you our life will never be the same. Please grant your joy as we celebrate your birth. Amen.

Dangerous Birth

DECEMBER 22, 2017

"In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.'"

Matthew 2:1-8

Jesus' birth was a dangerous birth. To those who love power, Jesus' birth was a threat.

Power cannot overcome love. That is why power fears love. People who rejoiced and welcomed the birth of Jesus were powerless people like the shepherds. Powerful people like king Herod could not celebrate and welcome Jesus' birth.

Let us rejoice and give praise to God! Our Lord Jesus is born.

Lord, I accept you in my heart. Please come into my heart and be my King. Amen.

What Does the Lord Require of Us?

DECEMBER 23, 2017

"When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road."

Matthew 2:9-12

The wise men brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh as their gifts to baby Jesus. What does the Lord want from us?

The prophet Micah taught us what the Lord would require of us. "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Lord, knowing that living my life according to your will is the gift you want, I give my life to you. Amen.

Where is my King?

DECEMBER 24, 2017

"Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

The Massacre of the Infants

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

‘A voice was heard in Ramah,

wailing and loud lamentation,

Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.’"

Matthew 2:13-18

The wise men asked king Herod where the child was who was born king of the Jews. The wise men didn't seem to be so wise. Because of their question, so many innocent children lost their lives. They assumed that the king would be born where the power was.

Where is our King? Where are we looking for our King?

Almost at the end of his book, Matthew recorded this: "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25:35-36)

*Lord, help me find you in my sisters and brothers who are suffering.
Amen.*

The Word Became Flesh

DECEMBER 25, 2017

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known."

"

John 1:1-18

God's love was confirmed through the birth of Jesus. Jesus came to this world with God's love. Jesus taught us the truth about life. Jesus showed us the light when we were in darkness. Jesus gave us hope when we lived in despair. Jesus gave us life when we lived with no vitality. That is God's love for us.

Lord, may your love bring forth new life within me. Amen.

Ash Wednesday

FEBRUARY 14, 2018

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly, your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am."

Isaiah 58:6-9

**Memory Verse: "Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am."
(Isaiah 58:9)**

A real fasting is to restrain our greed. In that sense, being mindful of others, especially those who are in difficult situations, is the "real fast". Today is Ash Wednesday. It is known as a day of fasting. Ash Wednesday ushers in the 40-day period of Lent. Let us reflect on the real meaning of fast.

Lord, help me let go of my greed and live a life of fasting during this lent season. Amen.

Easter Sunday

APRIL 1, 2018

"O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually."

Psalm 105:1-4

Memory Verse: "Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually." (Psalm 105:4)

Today is Easter Sunday. The greatest work among God's works is the resurrection. God showed the power of God's resurrection by raising Jesus Christ. Now, we can live with hope. Death cannot oppress us and take away our freedom anymore. Death cannot claim victory over us anymore.

Let us praise God who gave us life and thank Jesus Christ who showed us the power of God's life.

Lord, life swallowed up death. God of life defeated the power of death. Hallelujah Amen.