

5. **Caring person:** We know how caring she is towards her neighbors when they are in trouble at the wedding at Cana.
6. **Careful person:** Every word she received concerning Jesus she treasured and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19).
7. **Cross bearer:** From the day Simeon told her of the sword that would pierce her heart she bore the cross of her son in her heart.
8. **Commissioned person:** Not only she taught boy Jesus the Law of the Lord as Hebrew parent but later she became the disciple of Jesus who received great commission. She was in the group in the upper room on the day of Pentecost.
9. **Confident Person:** Her song of praise (Magnificat) shows how confident she was of her heavenly blessing (Lk 1:46-55).
10. **Christ like person:** Physically she gave her likeness to Jesus, but spiritually she became like her son which is the ultimate will of our heavenly Father for every believer (Rom 8:29).

May we all be like Mary and give Christ to the world!

Life Application: Joyful expectation of Christ will be reflected in our Christmas celebration when we win souls for Him.

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30-11-08

Joyful Expectation of Christ's coming

(Gen 33:1-17, I Thess 3:6-13, Luke 1:39-45)

Advent is about new beginning. That is what the word 'advent' means –coming into being. Today begins something new, completely new. Advent is an abrupt disruption in our ordinary time. It is not only new season in the church year; it is utterly New Year, new time, new life. Everything begins again. In this season we are at the brink of some thing utterly new, long yearned for but beyond our capacity to enact. Advent invites us to awaken from our numbered endurance and our domesticated expectations, to consider our life afresh in the light of new gifts that that God is able to give. God is going to give Christ afresh if only we can say Marantha. Come Lord Jesus!

The world is at war now. Like Cain who killed his brother, people everywhere are killing not realizing that those whom they are killing are their own fellow brethren created by the same Father God. Christ came and lighted the lamp of love, so that we can love our brothers in a new way as Jacob and Esau started loving each other in today's Old Testament lesson. This lamp of love once kindled also lights many more lamps to the utmost Joy of heaven. We see this in the life of Paul in today's Epistle lesson. All those who receive the incarnate word of God will be blessed according to the prophetic utterance of Elizabeth in today's Gospel lesson. So the joyful anticipation of Christ's coming is anticipation of the peace, proclamation of joy of salvation and part taking in the heavenly

blessing of eternal inheritance. That is the message of first Sunday of the Advent.

The Old Testament Lesson: Gen 33:1-17; The Joy of Peace

The context of the episode in this portion is God revealing Himself to Jacob at the brook of Jabbok. His encounter with God at n tf8ty9nb n k, when they live as the sons of God in peace and harmony. That is what the angels sang when Jesus was born. Glory to the God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests (Lk 2:13) People can't live in peace with others unless they are at peace with God. Therefore all who want to be peacemakers must first of all be proclaimers of the good news like Paul in today's Epistle lesson.

**The Epistle Lesson: I Thess 3:6-13
The Joy of winning souls**

Paul the greatest soul winner established this church during His 2nd Missionary journey about 51 A.D. He wrote this letter to encourage the young believers there. He wanted to assure them of his love, to praise them for their faithfulness during persecution and to remind them of their hope in the sure return of the Lord Jesus. Advent is the best time to share Jesus and win people to Christ. God has sent His son first time not to condemn the world but to save the world through His son (Jn 3:17). God the son has been sending His disciples as the Father has sent him. That is for the salvation of the world. We too like Paul can have joy in the presence of our God only when we win souls for Him.

We are living in the period between the two comings of the Lord. As we celebrate His first coming may all of us be sure of our salvation, grow in salvation and work out our salvation with fear and trembling so that we will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His Holy ones. That is what it means to be blessed in the prophetic utterance of Elizabeth in today's Gospel lesson.

**The Gospel Lesson: Luke 1:39-45
The Joy of Giving Jesus to the world**

God is looking for Marys to give Jesus to the world .Mary I feel was the first Christian in the world because she was the first to conceive Jesus (as fetus). Every blessed Christian like Mary will have 10 Characteristics. Blesses Christian is

- 1. Converted person:** The day Mary believed the Word of God that came to her she was saved (Ep 1:13).
- 2. Cleansed person:** When she opened her womb for God to come in the Holy Spirit cleansed her (II Thes 2:13). In the same way when we take the words of Jesus which are spirit they cleanse us and sanctify us (Jn 6; 63, 17:17).
- 3. Consecrated person:** Submitting herself to God's will as "the Lord's servant" (LK 1:38) she offered herself as a living sacrifice by consecrating her womb as the temple of God.
- 4. Committed Person:** From the day she received God's word and conceived the incarnate word she no longer lived for herself but for Christ. (2 Cor 5:15)

We do all sorts of unscriptural erroneous things during Christmas, because we know not the scriptures or the power of god (Mk 12:24). On the other hand Knowledge of Scriptures affects our attitude towards the present and future. The more we know about what God has done in years past, the greater confidence we have about what we will do in the day's ahead. We should read our Bibles diligently to increase our understanding that God's will is best for us. The key to the unity in the church is 1) faith 2) Knowledge of the Son of god. Both come from the Bible. People are perishing for lack of knowledge of God (Hosea 6:4).

May God of patience and comfort give us one mind to realize the value of the gift of the Bible, above all gifts of Christmas? How sad it will be if people don't unpack the divine gift of the Bible. Only those who behold the glory of god in the Bible, as the shepherds have seen Jesus in Bethlehem, can glorify god, and praise him with one mind and mouth for all the things that they have heard and seen. That is every day Christmas, for Christmas you know is worship (Christmas). Wish you every day Christmas and not X-Mas on 25th December!

Life Application

The Lord is reminding us once again that we have a savior, who is the Christ the Lord. Seeing Him is life. We can see Him only when we open the Bible. So let us open the Bible often.

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07-12-08

THE WORD OF GOD-THE BREAD OF LIFE

(Is 55.1-13, Rom 15:1-6, John 6:35-51)

In the beginning was the word and the word was with god and the word has god. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (John 1:1,14). That is Christmas. John in his letter says that God has sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through Him (I John 4:9). Jesus made us, who were dead in our trespasses and transgressions live, by making us born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and enduring word of God (1 Pet 1:23) .Jesus is the incarnate word of god. The Bible is the written word of God. Martin Luther said, "The Bible is the cradle which gives us Jesus Christ". Wherever Jesus went He went as the word of God and accomplished God's purpose. That purpose is salvation of the world according to the Old Testament lesson of today. God's will for everyone is salvation (I TIm 2:4). This is possible only through Jesus the incarnate word. Man shall live because of Christmas day and thereafter by looking at Jesus who appears in the Bible and believing in Him. This is to day's gospel lesson. The Bible is the written agreement of the eternal covenant that God made with all those who believe in Him assuring them that they have eternal life (1 John 5:13) This is today's epistle lesson.

Man shall live for ever because of Christmas day, for on that day God chose to give us rebirth through his word of truth (James 1:18). This is the eternal truth we have to learn to day.

**The Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 55:1-11
Jesus the mediator of eternal covenant**

The book of Isaiah is known as the mini Bible, for it contains 66 chapters. The first 39 chapters contain the history and the life of Israel like the old Testament. The next 27 chapters describe the person and ministry of Jesus Christ like the New Testament. Chapter 55 is God's invitation for a Divine banquet on the eve of signing the eternal covenant of peace, prosperity on earth and paradise after that. His table is spread with the costliest wine and milk of the word purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. So let us not spend money on cheap wines and cheap bread in the name of Christmas Banquets and dinners. May we all sit at the table that God has spread and feast on His word! Let us seek the Lord while he may be formed and call on Him to be saved while He is near. Let us for sake our old ways and come to the Lord, and He will have mercy on us and freely pardon us, for our eternal God who is the high and lofty one and who dwells in high and Holy place has decided to be born in the dirty cattle shed of our hearts to revive us if only we invite Him into our hearts with lowliness and humility. That is the happy Christmas and Merry Christmas. When we have Jesus the eternal word in us god's purpose will be fulfilled. That is living, not by bread alone, but by every word of God, seeking to do

God's will. God's will for everyone is salvation; this is the central truth of today's gospel lesson.

**The Gospel Lesson: John 6:35-51; Jesus the
Bread of Life**

The Keyword of John's gospel is eternal life. God's will forever one is eternal life (John 6:40). God's command is eternal life (John 12:50) only those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior has fulfilled god's will to go to heaven. Every Christmas is the reminder of the eternal truth that we have a savior born in Bethlehem. Life begins only when we see this son. He is not in Bethlehem anymore, but is ready to reveal himself to all who open the Bible; that is where we can see Him in all His glory (2 Cor 3:18), for there He reveals Himself and speaks to us, so that by hearing Him we get the saving faith. Those who don't care to spend time with the Bible, they are not feeding on the heavenly bread and they are sure to die spiritually. But for those who care to read the Bible not only they have life eternal, but also have eternal hope that is today's epistle lesson.

**Epistle Lesson: Romans 15:1-6
Jesus the Incarnate word of Hope**

God revealed Himself in the book of nature (Ps 19:1, Rom 1:20) in His son Jesus Christ (John 14:9), and in the Bible (John 1:1-2,14). God in His divine provision made the Bible to be written to show us that Jesus is the Christ the son of God so that we might believe in Him and live. Those who read study and meditate on it shall grow in faith, do good works in love and have eternal living hope.

As believers having Christ in us we should not retaliate but develop

1. Harmony among ourselves
2. Sympathy to other's needs
3. Love in treating each other as brothers and sisters.
4. Compassion in caring for each other
5. Humility - being willing to encourage one another and rejoice in each others success

Peter developed these qualities in a hard way and is encouraging everyone to develop these qualities to be effective witnesses in this world.

We do so many things during Christmas for which we may not give any reason but as followers of Jesus we must be ever ready to give reason for the hope that we have in all meekness and gentleness.

Christmas is worship of Christ, which according to all familiar Christmas passages is beholding the glory of God in a new way and then to glorify and praise Him by spreading all the things we see and hear. In this way every one can shine like stars leading many to Christ. May god help us to do that!

Life Application:-

May we be filled with all joy and peace of Christmas by the God of hope in whom we trust and overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit!

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14-12-08

HOPE OF SALVATION

(Zep 3:14-20, 1 Pet 3:8-16, Mk 13:24-27)

If man is to envisage the future, hope is psychological necessity. Even if there are no rational grounds for it man still continues to hope. Very naturally such hope even when it appears to be justified is transient and illusory. Where there is belief in the living God, who acts and intervenes in human life and who can be trusted to implement his promises, hope in specifically biblical sense becomes possible. Hope in the Biblical sense is "**the Hope of salvation**".

The ground for this hope is what God has done in the past, particularly in preparing for the coming of Christ and what God has been doing now through Christ. That is why the Christian dares to expect future blessings at present invisible (2 Cor 1:10). Our God is a God of hope. But He's Holy and expects His people to be Holy. Time and again his people forsook Him and landed themselves in trouble and were overwhelmed with grief and prolonged distress. In such situations God sent his prophets to his people to remind them that there will be always hope if they turn to God. This is to day's Old Testament lesson. In today's gospel lesson we find Jesus teaching His disciples how they have to live in this world awaiting his 2nd coming in hope. In today's epistle lesson we find Peter encouraging people to overcome evil with goodness in reaching out the world for Christ. When ever the Bible speaks of hope it never does it in isolation. It speaks of its connection with faith and love. The heroes of faith in Heb 11 are beacons of hope. By its connection with love hope is freed from

all selfishness. The Christian does not hope for blessings for himself which he does not desire to share. **That is what Christmas is all about. Christmas is a time of sharing Christ.** When we do that, we will be like stars shining not just in December like decoration stars, but forever as stars for Christ.

**The Old Testament Lesson-Zep 3:1 4-20
Hope of Redemption and Restoration**

As God's prophet, Zephaniah was bound to speak the truth. This he did clearly thundering certain judgment and horrible punishment, for all who defy the Lord. But in the midst of terrible pronouncement there is hope. The first Chapter of Zephaniah is filled with terror. In chapter 2 however a whispered promise appears. When we seek the Lord we will be rescued, sheltered and restored. (2:3, 7) In chapter 3 the quiet refrain grows into crescendo as God's salvation and deliverance for those who are faithful to Him is declared.

We too deliberately disobeyed God and brought on ourselves the wrath of god. We deserve nothing but judgment. But God so loved us, that He himself sent His only begotten son as sin offering and condemned sin (Rev 8:1-4) The curse of the Sin, He has put on His Son so that everyone could now be blessed (Gal 3:13). Christ tasted death for everyone so that everyone could have eternal hope (Heb 2:9, Rom 6:23). In this way God would turn our sighing into singing; His wrath into love, and He makes us His people and dwells with us. There will be no more death, mourning or crying or pain. This is the hope of our salvation we are looking for when the Lord returns to earth for the second time. As disciples we have to wait for that day expectantly. This is what Jesus taught

His disciples about the times that would happen at His 2nd coming in to day's gospel lesson.

**The Gospel Lesson (mark 13: 24-2)
The hope of the Return of the Lord**

When Jesus' disciples wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed Jesus gave them the prophetic picture of that time including events leading up to it. He also talked about the future events connected with his return to earth to judge all people. He warned his followers about the future so that they could learn how to live in the Present. Many predictions Jesus made in this chapter have not yet been fulfilled. He did not make them so that we would guess, when they might be fulfilled, but to help us remain spiritually alert and prepared at all times as we wait for His return and be busy with the work he has entrusted to do, that is evangelization of the world. In spite of the persecution we face, we have to reflect the goodness and love of Jesus. This is to day's Epistle lesson.

**The Epistle Lesson: I Pet 3: 8-16
The hope of reaching out the Lost**

Many first century followers of Christ were tortured and abused and persecuted for believing in and obeying Jesus. Having gone through similar suffering Peter wrote to those people who were scattered and had been suffering for faith, giving comfort and Hope and urging continued loyalty to Christ. He is explaining the believers to imitate Christ all their social roles as masters and servants, husbands and wives; Church members and neighbors after explaining them that every believer is a temple of God and Holy royal priest proclaim the praises of God who called them out of darkness into marvelous light.

forgiveness of sins and peace among those who are sanctified" (Acts 26:16-18). From the day He received God's word, he was totally a changed person. He dedicated His life to the Lord like Mary. The letter to Philippians was written by Paul when he was in prison. It radiates the joy of the Lord that comes when we obey, when we pray and when we proclaim the Gospel. We can rejoice in the Lord always even in the Prison because we have the peace of God which transcends all understanding, that guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. In view of all what we have seen in lives of Mary and Paul God is asking us to think about such things whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy . Can there be any thing more excellent or praiseworthy than be used for God's purposes like Mary and Paul.

**May we become like them and radiate smiles of joy in this joyless world. Praise the Lord!
Amen!**

Life Application:

Are you able to smile all the time no matter what!
You can if you have the God who smiles in you!

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21-12-08

Rejoice the Lord is near!

(Ze 2:10-13, Pi 4:4-9, Lk 1:46-56)

Smile! It costs you nothing. There are people on whose face we never find a smile. We can't but rejoice when we are in Jesus and Jesus is in us, because in God's presence there is fullness of Joy (Ps 16:11). There is difference between joy and happiness. For some happiness depends on circumstances, material things and experiences. When those things disappear they become unhappy. In contrast to happiness stands joy. Running deeper and stronger joy is quiet, confident assurance of God's love and work in our lives; that He will be there no matter what! Happiness depends on happenings but joy depends on Christ. I like very much what Sherwood Eliot Wirt longtime associate of blessed Billy Graham says in his book, "The God who Smiles". He says, "Joy is a very special divine attribute. Quoting John 15:11 he says, "Joy began in heaven with Father's smile, came to earth with the son and is preserved for us as a fruit of the Holy Spirit". To day in spite of all the high tech development in the world, people are not able to have the joy of the Lord and smile because they are forsaking God, who is the source of all joy. In today's Old Testament lesson God is commanding us to have that kind of His joy which begins when He comes to dwell in us. When God told Mary the daughter of Zion, that He would come and dwell among His people through her, she bursts forth into a song of joy praising God in today's gospel lesson.

Those who have the joy of the Lord as their strength can rejoice, no matter where they are, like Paul in today's Epistle lesson. Thus our calling is, says Sherwood Wirt, "to proclaim the message of the Lord Jesus Christ as good news- great news- great joy and to evangelize, convert disciple and commission new believers. Then there will be joy to the world, for the Lord has come.

**The Old Testament lesson: Zechariah 2:10-13
The Joy of His Sacred Presence**

In the beginning was the word. The word was with God. The word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. This is what has happened when Jesus Christ has come into the world says John in His Gospel (Jn 1:1, 14). This is the fulfillment of what God has promised through the prophet Zechariah in this scripture portion. It could happen because one daughter of Zion, Mary said, "yes" to God's proposal. When she received God's word she was the first to have the joy of salvation which had burst forth from her as a song. We call this song in today's Gospel lesson 'Magnificat'.

**The Gospel Lesson: Luke 1:46-55;
The Joy of Salvation**

When ever we receive the word into our hearts, there will be real joy. It is the joy of obedience. Prophet Jeremiah puts this as, "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight for I

bear your name O Lord God Almighty."(Jer 15; 16).Literally Mary bore the Almighty. No wonder she rejoiced having received God's eternal blessing, because every body now calls her "Blessed Mary". When we receive the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation and when we believe it like Mary we will be sealed with the Holy Spirit like Mary and out of that fullness of spirit springs forth song of praise. Mary's song is full of scriptures because Mary has the habit of keeping God's word in her heart and ponder it (Lk 2:19)

If Mary had denied her incredible position she would have been throwing God's blessing at Him. Now God is asking every one of us to give Jesus to the world like Mary. We can if only we can say like Mary, "I am the Lord's servant, May it be as you said." Then we become permanent stars in the sky of God's salvation like Paul who radiated that joy of salvation where ever He was.

**The Epistle lesson: Phil 4:4-9;
The Joy of Service and Suffering**

Like Jeremiah Paul too ate the words that had come to him. The same Luke who wrote about Mary also wrote about Paul. The word that came to Paul is, "I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and witness of what you have seen and what I will show you. I am sending you to people to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive

generation (Phi 2:16) .He hasn't asked us to have a Christmas tree or not to have one but has asked us to be like trees planted by the rivers of His word and bear the fruit of the spirit always for His glory. With out letting justice roll like a river and righteousness like a never failing stream if we sing carols He is not interested. Instead He says, "Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to you music..." (Amos 5:23, 24). He hasn't asked us to come or not to come to the Church on 24th or 25th December but He has asked not to trample His courts if we want to attend the service with out accepting Him (Is 1:12).God hasn't asked us to celebrate the birth day of His Son but listen to the words of His beloved Son Jesus Christ in whom He is well pleased (Mt 17:5) and kiss His son Ps 2:12). So let us be careful not to set aside the commands of God in order to observe our own traditions and nullify the word of God (Mark 7:9, 13). So let us worship Jesus our God every day. Wish you everyday Christmas! May God bless you with peace of Christmas!

Life Application:

So what is peace? Let us first consider what peace is not. It is not running from difficulties or the avoidance of pain or persecution, or hiding in a safe place. Peace is not only the absence of war and trials. Peace means wholeness or completeness. It is Shalom including rest, health, safety, and prosperity. True peace is the peace of God which comes from Jesus, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:7).

When you enjoy the peace of God, it is a peace which passes all natural understanding, it is exceedingly great joy; it is sufficiency and contentment regardless of your situation.

How does one attain peace?

1. It comes from the work that Jesus accomplished on the Cross
2. From the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
3. It is a promise of God in Scripture
4. It is a Gift from God through Jesus
5. It is an Inheritance that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, left to His disciples.
6. It is a Blessing.

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24-12-08

Christmas eve

Peace on Earth

(Is 9:2-7, I Tim 3:16, Luke 2:1-14)

We are going through the most troubled times with the sudden collapse of world economy particularly of USA and other super powers, the persistent wars in many countries and the increasing terror attacks killing many innocent people . We hear news of people killing themselves unable to bear the sudden shock of loosing their jobs over night. Around us the world is reeling under pressure due to uncertainty of the future .People are living in constant fear of death. The rising prices of Oil and other essential commodities are making things worse. No matter what is going on in the world around us we can still sing the popular Telugu Christmas song "Chinta ledika yesu puttenu" because we have God who cares for His people. So we can still have the joy of Christmas because those who are in Christ Jesus have the confidence, the hope and the peace that our sovereign God is in control. **We can always rest in peace, because Christ has come to give that peace that passeth understanding as Prince of Peace fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah in today's Old Testament lesson. The basis of our peace is the mystery of Godliness which God has revealed to us in Christ through his prophets and apostles. This is today's epistle lesson. Through the Gospel lesson God is once again telling us the thing that has come to pass which is, "there is born to you a savior who is Christ the Lord".**

Celebrating Christmas is going into the Bethlehem of the Bible daily in haste, find the savior who is waiting for you to meet and then go and tell every one about what you have seen .Therefore Christmas is a daily affair. Then you will have the peace that passeth understanding and it will guard your hearts and minds. This happens only through Christ. With out Him what we do on 25th December will be X-mas.

**The Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7.
The Son of promise of Peace**

From the moment that Adam sinned and a sinful nature was imputed to mankind, the world has lacked peace, and

people throughout all the ages, has been putting forth unsuccessful efforts to find peace. In the Bible, God has said, **"There is no peace ... for the wicked."** (Isaiah 57:21). The Apostle James writes: **"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?"** (James 4:1) [or from within yourself?] The Scripture continues to point out that the root factors for the lack of peace is sin, and specifically mentioned are wrongful pride, lust and greed. But the good news is that God has dealt with the problem of sin by sending His son about whom Isaiah is prophesying in this portion. This son has both the human and divine nature. The words "a child is born" show his human nature .The words "a son is given" show His divine nature. This verse also predicts Jesus first and second coming. At His first coming He is born as a child. At His second coming He will come as Lord from heaven to reign on the thrown of His Father. The son who is the gift of God is called wonderful because He is both God and man. He is called counselor because He is God who is all wisdom and Knowledge. His counsel is always correct for He is the all knowing, all wise God. Jesus is the mighty God –God the mighty one who alone can defeat the Satan. He is called everlasting Father because He is one with God the Father and the Holy Spirit in power and glory. The last name in this passage is "the Prince of Peace" ,because the peace that Jesus gives is beyond human understanding By His death on the cross for the sins of mankind He made peace possible between the Holy God and sinful man. The peace Jesus gives is eternal. He said, **"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you."** (John 14:27a).

How does one attain peace? This is the secret of all Godliness as Paul says in today's Epistle lesson.

**The Epistle Testament Lesson: I Tim 3:16.;
The secret of peace**

In this short Hymn Paul affirms the humanity and divinity of Christ. By so doing he is revealing the heart of the Gospel, "the mystery of godliness". The incarnation of Jesus is the basis of our being right with God or peace with God. His resurrection

showed that He is the mighty God who has defeated death. In this way Jesus is God man the only mediator between man and God. This is the mystery of all godliness. No body can become Godly on their own. We can't please God on our own; we must depend on Jesus. As a man He lived a perfect life, and so He is the perfect example of how to live. As God Jesus gives us the power to do what is right. The secret of having peace is to have

1. Peace with God
2. Peace with others
3. Peace with yourself
4. Peace with all creation through Jesus Christ.

So Jesus is what the world needs and the Father has sent Him. This is the good news of great joy which God is revealing to us once again in today's Gospel lesson.

**The Gospel Lesson: Gospel 2:1-14
The sons of God of Peace**

What ever may be happening in the world our God is under control for He is telling us once again "don't be afraid". But He is asking us to go and see His son, and kiss Him and be peace makers spreading His peace. He is no longer in the manger in Bethlehem. He is at your heart's door to greet you if at all you want to wish Him Happy birthday. There is no greater birth day gift you can give Him today than your heart and say yes to His invitation to be a peace maker. Are you a peace maker or peace breaker? Open your heart to day; He wants to come in for when He wanted to come in to the world there was no room in the inn of the World. Because there is no room for Jesus in the world there is no peace in the world. He is looking for people who can be the ambassadors of His peace and sing with his angles, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests".

The message of Christmas is, "Jesus the son of God has become son of man to go through the suffering of death on the cross to bring many sons of man to the glory of the sons of God." There can be peace on earth only when every son of man on earth becomes the son of God by accepting Jesus Christ as their personal savior .Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called sons of God. God hasn't asked us to have a star or not to have one but He has asked us to shine like stars of Christ holding on to the word of God in this dark and perverted

follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be" (Jn 12:26). God Chooses to be with those who are humble and contrite in spirit. This is today's Gospel lesson.

The Gospel Lesson: Mathew 1:15-25
The God who is our savior Emmanuel

Christmas was possible because of two humble poor people but righteous like Joseph and Mary. They got the first chance to have God for them. Joseph proved to be the ideal earthly Father of Jesus, because it appears as though Jesus inherited the fear of God which Joseph has. Joseph who is the character with out any dialogue in the true drama of Christmas speaks volumes about the fear of God, and righteousness more than many of words can express by his silent obedience to God's word He received. That is the true humble spirit of Christmas. Receive Jesus the incarnate Word of God like, Joseph with out any questions and you can have Emmanuel-God with you for ever.

That is how God the High and lofty one who inhabits eternity and dwells in the high and holy place (Is 57:15) began to dwell with people like Mary and Joseph who have contrite and humble spirit. The same God wants to be with anyone today who opens their hearts and homes and bless them with every heavenly blessing beginning with the forgiveness of their sins and his eternal presence. Open your heart and home for the Lord to come in and have a blessed Christmas like the first Christmas Mary and Joseph had with out a cake, coat and costly gifts but with the word of Christ in them and Christ with them.

**Wish you Christ centered Christmas on 25th
December and there after everyday Christmas!**

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25-12-08

Christmas Message

God with us

(Is 11:1-9, Col 1;13-20, Mt 1:18-25)

"Will God be with us when we go to bar?"

"No"

"Why?"

He is a gentleman. He is good .He gave us freedom .He won't force himself into anybody's life. If they choose not to glorify Him, He leaves them to do what ever they like. But before that He will always call people with outstretched hands to come to Him and be blessed. . In the beginning God chose to be with His created beings. When He was with them they enjoyed divine fellowship with joy and eternal pleasures (Ps 16:11).After that they chose not to have Him and went their own way . Even then God didn't leave us. He was after us .Once again He chose to be with us. That is the message of Christmas. But to enjoy His presence we have to choose to be with Him. He is always ready to live with us. The question is, "Are we ready?" Celebrating Christmas is saying yes to God when He wants to come and be with us. Two persons Mary and Joseph said yes to God when He wanted to be with them and we have Christmas to celebrate .Otherwise there shouldn't have been Christmas at all .After that many said yes and had God with them in their lives doing marvelous things .Once again on this Christmas day He is ready to come and be with all those who want Him. Before that He is showing us who He is and what He wants to do with us. Through the Old Testament lesson He shows Himself as the Prophetic Word, that which was from the beginning. In the Epistle lesson He shows Himself as the Son of God who is the creator and Lord of everything, but came to earth to die on the Cross for every one so that everyone can live for ever. In the gospel lesson we find how the eternal word and the prophetic word has become the incarnate word in Jesus and have started to be with everyone who opens their heart for Him as their God.

**The Old Testament Lesson: Is 11:1-9
God who is our Prince of Peace.**

When God as their divine ruler was ruling them with love like a loving Father, the people of Israel wanted a king like the people around them. God granted their wish and gave them kings beginning with Saul. The history of Israel shows how they have messed up with what is gifted to them, and at times the people might have regretted for their foolish choice to have kings. But God didn't leave his people even though they rejected Him. He promised them a king who would establish an eternal kingdom of light that drives darkness with justice, righteousness, equality, faithfulness, fearlessness and peace. In that golden age there will not be fear of any kind from man or beast. That perfect King is Jesus who is the rod and branch that will come from David's line. He is called wonderful because of the spirit of wisdom and understanding He has. He is called counselor for the divine counsel and knowledge He gives. He is called the mighty God because He is God Himself in human form. The word from His mouth is like a double edged sword that slays the wicked and revives the humble. What Isaiah has prophesied is fulfilled in none other than Jesus the son of God into whose kingdom will God our Father brings us. This is today's Epistle lesson.

**The Epistle Lesson: Col 1:13-20
The God who is our Atonement**

There is no ritual as such in the Bible as celebrating Christmas. But the Bible says if we wish to go to heaven we have to do God's will. God's will for every one is to see His son, believe in Him to inherit eternal life. The Christmas message is always the same -there is a savior born for you, who is Christ the Lord.(Luke 2:10,11). All those who received the message hastened to see that savior and were never the same again. For those who haven't seen Him yet He is appearing to day once again as the prince of peace in the Old Testament lesson and Redeemer in the Epistle lesson and savior in the Gospel lesson. He is no more in the manger nor on the cross but at your hearts door knocking. We are in a world gripped in the Fear of

unseen forces of hate and terror like the Colossians of Paul's day who were in constant fear of unseen dark forces. Paul is assuring the believers saying that they are delivered from all powers of darkness because of their faith in Jesus Christ. They now belong to the kingdom of God's beloved Son, who is also God. To day see Jesus

1. As the image of the invisible God. He is the exact representation of God. He not only reflects God but reveals God to us (John 1:18, 14:9).
2. As the first born of all creation. As the first born He has all the priority and authority of the first born prince in the king's house hold. Verse 15,16 are the strongest statements about the divine nature of Christ found anywhere in the Bible. Christ is supreme over all Creation because everything is created by Him and for Him.
3. As the head of the Church who shed His blood for His people. Once Dr. Billy Graham gave Christmas message in three points; The Cradle, The Cross and the Crown. Jesus is mostly remembered not by His birth but by His death on the cross. He was born to die. Therefore no Christian should be at the cradle of Christmas. He should take up His cross and follow Him daily. Jesus whose birth day we think we celebrate said, "If any one serves me, let Him follow me ...Carrying His cross daily.(John 12:26, Lk 9;23) That is everyday Christmas. Then he will inherit the crown of life.

No body knows the actual date on which Jesus was born. I

think God deliberately hasn't revealed it because it differs for different people. The day one invites Jesus into one's heart it is his or her Christmas day as well as one's spiritual birthday. Because Jesus was born we could be born again. 3rd September is my Christmas. From that day every day is Christmas for me because I worship Him and serve Him everyday as He is with me from that day onwards according to His promise. "Who ever serves me must

We don't know when Joseph died. But we believe that he was alive till Jesus attained 12 years. He trained Jesus in the trade of carpentry; made sure he had good spiritual training in Nazareth and took the whole family to Jerusalem for the Passover which Jesus continued to observe during his adult years. What a model father was Joseph! Every thing he received regarding Jesus from God, he believed and at every stage he followed God's leading and this willingness of him to follow God's leading empowered Him to be honored as Jesus' earthly Father.

Mary the obedient Mother, Joseph the obedient Father, Jesus the obedient Son, no wonder this family became a divine gift to the world that saved the world, set an example to the world and is summoning every family to be like them, a blessing to the world.

Life Application:

Fathers, be like Joseph!

Mothers, be like Mary!

Children, be like Jesus!

Then our families will be divine gifts to the world!

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Family as God's Gift

(Joshua 24:14-22, Gal 6;1-10, Math 2:13-23)

When God decided to destroy all life on earth, He resolved to save one group of people and it was a family unit. God could have saved a single couple and let the human race start over from there, but He decided to save an entire family with Father, mother, sons and daughters in law. The length God went to in preserving this family indicates the great value he places on the family unit and extended family. Therefore we should also be preserving the family, not only by how we treat our families but also by how we encourage and inspire and lead others to value, build and preserve our families as well.

Humanity together is a great family and God is its Father (Ep 3:14). So God is the source of every Family. God has brought Adam and Eve together to start the first family with blessing and instructions. Life, individual or family continues only when it is with in the God given boundaries of His word. Otherwise it ceases to exist, spiritually. Physically it may exist. As God is spirit, life according to Him is life in the spirit. So God wants all families to be spiritual units. To be spiritual means to have the spirit of God. Family in spiritual sense is faith home or house hold of faith. The family of Joshua is an example for this. Rearing a family or living in a family is like cultivating

an agricultural field to harvest spiritual fruit. This is today's Epistle lesson. Even when God is born in a family it is not immune to the enemy attacks. Its survival depends on the faith of the Father. This is today's Gospel lesson.

Old Testament Lesson: Joshua 24:14-22
Family is a household of faith.

The motto of a family as spiritual unit should be "we will serve the Lord". The lead should be taken by both the parents. Serving the Lord means following Him. Jesus said, "If any one serves me let him follow me, where I am, there my servant will be also. If any one serves me, Him my Father will honor (Jn 12:26). In the household of faith there will be followers of Jesus, not just Christians. That means all the members of the family will be disciples. As parents they should know what it means to be a disciple of Christ and they should teach their children diligently how to be Disciples of Christ. That is what training the Child in the way they have to walk. The way they have to walk is the only way of Jesus. So the parents as they follow Jesus they should lead their children as disciples. That means they should sow the seeds of the word in the fields of the hearts of their children, so that they bear spiritual fruit when they grow. This applies to every family in the church and the Church as the family of God. This is today's Epistle lesson.

Epistle lesson: Galatians 6; 1-10;
Family is the field of God

Here Paul is instructing the members of God's family that is the Church how to treat others when they find them sinning. Parents should grow to the stature of disciplining their children by example. In the house hold of faith just as the students have to take care of the material needs of their teachers, children should take care of the needs of their parents who have taught them spiritual truths.

Sowing spiritually means, sowing the seed of the word in our lives. That means applying it to every situation, at every stage of our lives so that we bear fruit of the spirit individually and together as family. When the motto of the family is "we serve the Lord" that family will be always doing the good works that are the results of their faith working in love. In this, the father should take the lead role. For on Him depends the survival of the whole family. This is today's Gospel lesson.

Gospel Lesson: Mathew 2:13-23
Father is the Guard of the family

Joseph is the model Father who has guarded his children from the enemy attack, by putting strong fence of obedience to God's word around them. Joseph was receptive to God's guidance. Divine guidance comes only to prepared hearts.