The Book of Luke Christmas Devotional

Chapter Contributors

1 Ernest Keplin..... Underwood Campus Pastor
2 Beth Eidahl..... Bismarck Campus Pastor
3 Ashley Becker..... Beulah Campus Administrator
4 Jordan Ziniel..... Bismarck Youth Pastor
5 Ed Langeliers..... Network Executive Pastor
6 Ron Enget..... Network Lead Pastor
7 Justin Werven..... Beulah Campus Pastor
8 Kristen Boles..... Bismarck Family & Children's Pastor
9 Aimee Oyen..... Beulah Worship Pastor
10 Marc Eidahl..... Bismarck Campus Pastor
11 Mike Brackney..... Billings Prayer Director
12 Rachael MCCandless..... Billings Campus Administrator
13 Andrew Sheldon..... Jamestown Campus Pastor
14 Ruthie Werven..... Bismarck Service Administrator
15 Jennifer Werven..... Beulah Campus Pastor
16 Tobias Werven..... Bismarck Worship Director
17 Shantel Gross..... Tioga Campus Administrator
18 Jean Langeliers..... Network Executive Pastor
19 Andrew Hill..... Bismarck Associate Pastor
20 Gabe Kent..... Billings Worship Pastor
21 Zach Crowe..... Billings Next Gen Pastor
22 Ron Enget..... Network Lead Pastor
23 Ethan Eidahl..... Bismarck Campus Administrator
24 Josiah Bruzelius..... Billings Campus Pastor

This Christmas Season, let us slow down together. By opening one chapter of Luke a day; from the angel's promise to the silent star-lit stable, and onward through the ministry of our Savior, we do not just count down the days until Christmas; we draw near to the person of Jesus as we intentionally spend time with Him.

May these daily moments in the Word anchor your soul, quiet the noise, and fill your home with the true peace and joy of His coming." May you encounter God as you learn more about him through the Gospel of Luke.

Trust for the Impossible

LUKE 1

The Gospel of Luke accounts for the remarkable life of Jesus. Everything about his life was a miracle. Chapter One starts with two miracle pregnancies that seem impossible. First, the angel, Gabriel, showed up with the news that Elizabeth would give birth to John the Baptist. They were probably thinking, “At our age? Are you sure you have the right address?”

Then there was Mary; she was a virgin, and to be pregnant would be impossible. Gabriel told her she would give birth to Jesus, the Son of God. Mary responded with remarkable faith: “I am the Lord’s servant… May your word to me be fulfilled” (Luke 1:38). Mary didn’t have all the details. She didn’t know exactly how everything would work out. She simply trusted God. Gabriel told Mary, “Nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37). **Luke reminds us that God is faithful, even when His promises seem impossible.**

What situation in your life currently feels impossible or uncertain? Are you willing to give God control of it instead of trying to figure everything out yourself? What is one step of faith you can take today?

Of Ordinary Moments

LUKE 2

Luke 2 presents the most celebratory chapter in the Bible with the long-awaited birth of Jesus, the Messiah. Supporting characters are Mary, Joseph, shepherds, Simeon, and Anna. For them, this *extraordinary* moment was preceded and followed by millions of ordinary moments.

Mary gave birth while homeless and carried a toddler through the desert to Egypt. She believed God. Joseph showed mercy to Mary, raised a child not biologically his own, and taught little Jesus carpentry. He obeyed God, proving himself righteous.

Simeon, Anna, and the shepherds waited daily for the promised Messiah. Were the shepherds already vibrant worshippers before the angelic party? Simeon's only bucket list item was to see the "Consolation of Israel" (Jesus). How many dreams did he forsake to be "just and devout," led by the Holy Spirit to the temple at the right moment? Anna sacrificed a conventional life, remaining in the temple 24/7 fasting, praying, speaking constantly of redemption.

Ultimately, Jesus was crucified and resurrected for our sin, ascended to heaven, and will return as glorious King to reign forever. We are also characters, waiting daily for Christ's return. We grieve with hope, fast and pray, serve, obey, abide, gather, worship, speak of redemption, live "just and devout" lives full of the Holy Spirit, and display His fruit. (Gal 5:22-23.)

These millions of *ordinary* moments prove Christ's redemption in us, our faithfulness, and belief in God's word. Like the previous characters, our lives will culminate in one extraordinary moment, when we see our Saviour face to face, for an eternal celebration.

Preparing the Way

LUKE 3

In Luke 3, John the Baptist prepares the way and the people for the coming Messiah. He calls people to repentance before Jesus enters the scene, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that he would be a voice calling in the wilderness to "prepare the way of the Lord."

He points out that fruit—the visible evidence of a changed life—should first be evident through repentance. Repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God. The Greek word for repent is metanoeō (μετανοέω), meaning to change one's mind. As people changes their mind about walking in sin, their life's direction should also change. **True evidence of a changed life starts with changing your thinking.**

He then tells the Jewish crowds not to claim they are clean before God just because Abraham is their father. You aren't saved by lineage, but by a personal conversion and encounter with God.

When the crowds ask what to do, he gives examples of turning from sin: stop extorting money, stop being greedy, help others, and stop falsely accusing people.

John teaches that each person must individually know Jesus and be accountable for their own life. We cannot piggyback on the faith of others. This Christmas season, ask Jesus into your life and begin to live a life of true repentance—turning away from your old ways and toward God's ways.

To Truly Know God

LUKE 4

"Here, too, the people were amazed at the things he said. For he spoke as one who knew the truth, instead of merely quoting the opinions of others as his authority." (Luke 4:32)

Jesus knew the truth. He wasn't just acquainted with it, he hadn't just heard others speak of it. No, He knew it himself. He knew it personally, and he believed in it with His whole heart. That is exactly why he came to the earth, that we might also know the truth.

So many today are just practicing religion or just playing church. We like the Bible because it teaches good morals. We like being christians, because it means we're good people and we try to do good things. When we live this way, we miss the whole reason why Jesus came to this earth.

Jesus came that we might know him. That we might spend time with him. He came to live with us. That is why those who know Him now possess his spirit, that we would live with Him.

Luke 4:32 says the people were amazed, they knew Jesus was different because he knew the truth. Jesus is the truth, and when we really know him, people will be amazed. Scripture tells us how Jesus continually went to lonely places to pray. Even Jesus didn't come here to perform for others. He needed to be with his Father, even while he was on earth. How do we think we can live our lives without being with our Creator, without really knowing him? **Our lives will shine his light in a way that nothing else can** when we don't simply know about him, but we really know him!

Good News of Great Joy

LUKE 5

Luke 5 reveals the good news of great joy that the angel proclaimed in Luke 2!

Luke 2:10: An angel said, "...I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people; for today in the city of David there is born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

We read in **Luke 5:18-25** this good news that Christ brought to earth. Jesus was in a full house, and some men had to open the roof and let a paralyzed man down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." The religious leaders began to say, "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" Jesus then said to them, which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? Jesus then said to the paralytic: "I say to you, get up, pick up your stretcher, and go home." Immediately he got up, picked up whathe had been lying on, and went home glorifying God."

Within these 7 verses we see revealed the 'good news of great joy. **Jesus the Savior came to earth to forgive our sins and to heal our diseases!** The word Savior comes from the Greek word Sozo, which means saved, cured, made well, recovered, and restored. This is what Jesus demonstrated to this paralyzed man. This paralyzed man received his forgiveness and his healing! Jesus was revealing Psalm 103:2,3: "Bless the Lord... and forget none of His benefits. God forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases." This Christmas, receive the gift that Jesus gives you: complete forgiveness and total healing. That is good news of great joy!

Are You Ready For The Storm?

LUKE 6

Storms in life will come—financial, relational, business, and family. The question is not whether severe storms will arrive at your doorstep, but is your life built upon a strong foundation of immovable rock? **Will it stand** secure and unshaken against the wind, rain, and hail?

Jesus told us how that happens: we must not only hear His teaching, but do what He says, applying His truth consistently, day after day. The secret to a solid foundation is not knowing more truth, but consistently applying what you already know. Hearing the Word is not enough; we must act upon it.

The secret to a solid foundation is not simply knowing more and more truth. The secret is consistently **applying the truth you already know.** Hearing the Word is not enough. We must act upon it.

When you build your life upon God's Word, you become securely founded upon solid rock rather than shifting sand. When the storm passes, you will still be standing, because you have dug deep and built your life upon the unchanging teachings of Jesus Christ.

Put this into practice today. Identify a decision you face and ask, "What has Jesus already told me to do?" Small acts of obedience strengthen your foundation before the storm arrives.

Don't wait for the storm. Dig deep. Hear His Word. Do what He says. Build your life on the Rock.

The Gift of Compassion

LUKE 7

As we explore Luke this Christmas season, Luke 7 acts as a great template for our lives. Four distinct encounters show us how the compassion of Jesus changes lives.

Compassion for the Faithful - Verses 1-10
The faith of the Centurion teaches us Jesus didn't have to be physically present to heal his servant. He wants to see us with similar faith. *What's an area in your life that you can exercise faith?*

Compassion for the Hurting - Verses 11-17
Jesus demonstrated His heart for the hurting. Imagine the joy as the widow's son climbs off the cot and into his mother's arms! Even death cannot stop the power of Jesus. *How are you hurting that Jesus' compassion can bring healing?*

Compassion for the Doubting - Verses 18-35
John the Baptist asked tough questions from prison, wondering if his sacrifice was worth it. Jesus didn't rebuke John, but comforted him with the evidence of His miracles. *What are the tough questions do you want to ask Jesus?*

Compassion for the Lost - Verses 36-50
Finally, Jesus reveals His heart for the lost. Instead of rebuking the sinful woman, Jesus offers forgiveness. Have you ever felt rebuked instead of loved? Ask Jesus to reveal His love for you.

Christmas is a wonderful season to reflect on Jesus' compassion. Just like He met the faithful, hurting, doubting, and lost, He wants to do the same today.

Where Is Your Faith?

LUKE 8

One day, Jesus decided it would be a great idea to take His disciples on a boat ride across the lake. However, this was not a smooth venture that most of us prefer when it comes to riding on a body of water. Everyone boards the boat, Jesus settles in for a relaxing nap, and a HUGE storm came!

Naturally, all the disciples freak out and panic. I'd likely have the same reaction. In their panic, they awaken Jesus, saying, "*Master, Master; we're going to drown!*" I imagine at first Jesus was slightly groggy upon waking up to such panic. Having just been woken up, He rebukes the wind and waves and suddenly the seas calm. Then He looks at His disciples and gives a haunting reply, "***Where is your faith?"***

You see they were on the boat **WITH** their Master. They had already seen Jesus do the impossible, and yet somehow, while having Jesus right in front of them, they chose panic over peace. While Jesus may not be beside us in flesh and bone today, His Holy Spirit is with us wherever we go. You know the same Spirit that enabled Jesus to do the impossible resides in you and me.

I have one simple challenge for you today. Pause and ask yourself, "*Where is my faith?*" Are you in panic or peace? If the answer is panic, I challenge you to reconfigure your faith and place it on the one who is the Prince of Peace.

Travel Light, Love Well

LUKE 9

Luke 9 has a lot of different stories in it. Although each section is very unique in this chapter, they all point to what life is supposed to be like as a **disciple of Jesus.** We are a part of such a special mission to spread the Gospel. Here are some key points to consider as you're reading today:

Radically Depend on Jesus (9:1-4)
Ever pack heavy for a trip? Often it can be because we lack trust, so we compensate by bringing more than we need. What's your "one more tunic?" How can you rely more on God's provision rather than yourself?

Shake Off the Dust of Rejection (9:5)
Do not hang onto bitterness or resentment. Broken relationships can be painful, but we need to forgive in order to live a life of peace. How can we love well? Who do you need to forgive?

Choose Self-Denial (9:23-25)
True gain only happens through holy loss. Christmas is the perfect time to live beyond yourself and serve Jesus. Who can you bless this season? How can you share your time and/or talent to show the love of Jesus to someone?

Don't Look Back (9:57-62)
Following Jesus requires intentionally leaving your old life behind. Let go of the old, and press on to become sanctified each day. Sometime it takes time, but let go of all the things that are holding you back from living a life in total freedom in Jesus.

Commitment to Community

LUKE 10

Our family loves the Christmas season; the lights, decorations, and opening presents we thoughtfully chose for each other. Yet, we always keep central that the greatest gift is Christ incarnate—

Jesus coming in the flesh to save us! He did not just model ministry; He modeled relationships, discipleship, and community. He spent great effort modeling our upward relationship with God and our horizontal relationships with one another.

In Luke 10, Jesus sends out 72 disciples in pairs, telling them: "But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' **And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it**. If not, it will return to you. And **remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give**...Do not go from house to house."

Here are some encouraging takeaways from Jesus' words:

- Look for people of peace: Find individuals who show a willingness to learn and build a relationship. Disciple and gather with them.
- Form deep incarnate community: God desires fellowship that involves gathering, discussing life and His Word, and eating together. This models Christ's connection.
- Commit over time: Jesus told them not to move from house to house because true relationships require commitment. We cannot love Jesus if we reject community with one another.

This season, let's pray that God will help us form a godly community that fosters health and growth.

The Journey of Prayer

LUKE 11

This chapter is so revelatory of how prayer works and the insight into the unseen realm is rich throughout the whole chapter. Luke begins this chapter with “The Lord’s Prayer” as in Matthew chapter 6, but unlike Matthew, he goes further into Jesus’ teaching on prayer. Jesus goes into a parable, which is his way of revealing the kingdom of God to the people around him.

In verses 5 through 7, I think Jesus is suggesting that when we pray, there can be resistance at some spiritual level of our prayers getting to heaven. I don’t believe that he is suggesting that the Father does not want to be bothered by our requests; in Matthew 6:8, he tells us that the Father knows what we need before we ask Him. Yet, He still wants us to ask. I also reject the idea that God wants us to beg in verses 11-13 Jesus reveals to us that the Father desires to bestow on us good things. If we ask for bread because we need bread, he isn’t going to give us a snake or scorpion, which are harmful and don’t meet our needs. This completely negates the belief that sometimes God causes bad things to happen for whatever reason. Sometimes bad things do happen to us, but it isn’t God doing it.

We must stop blaming God for those things and instead pray with persistence for his intervention and provision. For whatever reason, I think our prayers can he hindered be it some action from the dark kingdom or even sin in our life, but the main idea here is that Father knows I need bread but still wants me to ask for bread. And **He wants me to be persistent in my asking.** If we understand that we need to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking then prayer becomes a journey.

Prepare For The Coming One

LUKE 12

Maybe you are one of those people that has a whole pantry dedicated to if the grid turns off, or maybe you are the person who doesn't have anything in the pantry for dinner. In this chapter of Luke, Jesus is admonishing us to "Be Ready" for His coming. The Israelites were waiting for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, and now we await His return. This begs the question: how do we "get ready" and "stay ready"?

As we delve into this chapter we see some of the do's and don'ts of what to keep in our spiritual pantry. First, we need things in the pantry that don't perish. Anything we make or acquire independently will not help when He returns. God will provide the essentials for us. He places them right in the path as we follow Him. He gives the recipe and then He provides the ingredients. We simply need to follow his instructions. Obedience to His instruction produces lasting treasure. But the final admonition is to be alert. A part of Jesus' instruction to be alert is about staying faithful to the assignment; not growing lazy or self-serving. If you are counting on the chance to do some last minute procrastinating then you are out of luck, because we do not know the day of His return. **You cannot fool God. Whatever our motivations, they will be exposed.**

Whatever your secrets are, they will be known. So as we seek to prepare, as we seek to be ready and alert, remind yourself to store up things in your spiritual pantry, things that won't spoil. As many of the Israelites missed Jesus when He came, let us seek His kingdom, and at the proper time be rewarded for our readiness.

The Jesus of Christmas

LUKE 13

“"**Life's not fair!**" a teenager cries out after finding out she won't be able to go to the dance.
"**Life's not fair!**" whimpers the child who gets sent to his room after a squabble with his sibling.
"**Life's not fair!**" the angry convict says through gritted teeth.
"**Life's not fair!**" whispers a grandma at her husband's gravesite.

In our human experience, life is full of "life's not fair" moments. Jesus, in Luke 13, doesn't beat around the bush. He speaks of a group of Galileans who were murdered and of eighteen people on whom a tower fell and killed. After Jesus shares these examples, He immediately says:

Luke 13:4-5
"...do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

In our society, we often make "fairness" a truth or a goal, yet we know life is not fair. It's a constant tension we live in. When we look at repentance and forgiveness through God's eyes, we realize that our misfortunes are not necessarily the result of our wrongdoing, because all of us must ask for forgiveness.

Today, let's not make "fairness" our truth or our goal. **Let us make Jesus our truth and our goal.** We do this through repentance, by surrendering our expectations to Jesus, submitting "my truth" to the truth that is Jesus, and confessing that He is the first priority in our lives.

Intentional Pursuit

LUKE 14

"Blessed is the one who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Jesus replied, "A man gave a large banquet and invited many. He sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come, everything is ready.' But they all made excuses. The first said, 'I bought a field and must see it.' Another said, 'I bought five yoke of oxen to try.' Another said, 'I just got married, so I cannot come.'

The servant reported this and in anger, the master of the house said, 'Go quickly into the streets and bring in the poor, maimed, blind, and lame.' The servant reported, 'It is done, and there is still room.' The master said, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and make them come in so my house may be filled. None of those invited will taste my banquet.'"

"Come, because everything is now ready" (verse 17). The preparation is done! While we want to say an enthusiastic "Yes!", holiday busyness makes it easy to offer excuses.
These excuses weren't bad things, but they became more important than God. No good thing can take the place of Jesus.

The wonderful news is, "There's still room" (verse 22). **We didn't miss out, and the Holy Spirit urges us to come**. Let's respond to Him!

Thank you Lord, for pursuing me. Teach me to trust you with all my life's details and be surrendered. Help me slow down and be with you, Jesus! Amen!

Loved, Valued, and Worth Pursuit

LUKE 15

Christmas is my favorite holiday. It is incredible to consider that God's plan for rescuing humankind began by sending Jesus as a helpless baby into a hostile environment. Sending a child defenseless goes against every protective parental instinct. The only way to accept that situation is if circumstances were completely dire. Turns out, that is exactly the condition we were in.

Luke 15 paints a vivid picture of how lost humanity is. This chapter of "lost things" is really the Christmas story. It shows God the Father looking at us, seeing how abandoned we were, and sending Someone to save us. In each story, the lost thing was valued enough to be searched for and celebrated when found. This highlights God's feelings toward us: **we are loved, valued, and worth pursuing.**

My favorite part of the chapter is verse 20, when the lost son finally comes home: "When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him." Imagine the emotion of that moment—a father running to meet his child. That is the heart of God toward each of us: watching, waiting, and celebrating the moment we return to Him. It is a love that extends beyond what we have done to see who we truly are.

As you prepare to celebrate our Rescuer, remind yourself that you are worth searching for. You are worth celebrating when you come home to the Father. You are worthy of the plan that brought the lost ones home.

Christmas Generosity

LUKE 16

Luke 16 talks a lot about money, and stewardship. The first part of the chapter tells a crazy story about a manager who is about to get fired. So before he loses his job, he quickly goes around and slashes the debts of everyone who owes his boss money. He does this so that when he's out on the street, he will have friends to take him in. Jesus actually praises the guy, not for being dishonest, but for being clever with his resources to secure his future.

The story talks about using the worldly wealth we have right now to make an eternal impact. Jesus says we should use our resources to make friends so that, when it's all gone, we will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. It's not really about the money itself. **It's about taking whatever temporary things we have been given, and using them to bless others and build relationships.**

This paints a great picture for the Christmas season. Christmas is the ultimate time for giving and generosity. Instead of getting caught up in the stress of buying the perfect things, we can look at this season as a chance to be clever managers for God. We can use our time and our resources to bless the people around us and invest in things that last

The Jesus Who Makes Us Whole

LUKE 17

Why are so many walking with Jesus still broken and alone in this festive season? We know Jesus died on the cross and forgave our sins, making us white as snow.

Luke 17:3 says, "*If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them.*" We have instruction from Jesus to forgive. When we forgive, we should start from believing that Jesus died out of love for us (Romans 5:8). Knowing we are loved, we can follow His instructions—even forgiving those who deeply hurt us. **Our Lord knows that truly forgiving others brings us healing.** When we choose to trust in His plan, He works all things to the good (Romans 8:28).

We can hold onto Proverbs 3:5-6 and lean not on our own understanding or feelings. But in ALL our ways we should submit to Him who **LOVES** us (because there is truly nothing we can do to fix it ourselves). We can, however, **TRUST** that He will make our paths straight.

So we can obey His word and forgive. Let's be like the healed leper who came back praising God (Luke 17:15). We must be grateful for what the Lord has done, looking forward to what He will do.

Let knowing you are loved strengthen you to stand firm **in** Christ. Be grateful for the healing power of the blood shed on the cross as you walk with Jesus, the Jesus who makes us whole.

Pray His Promises

LUKE 18

“He told them a parable to illustrate that it is necessary always to pray and not lose heart.” (Luke 18:1)

Luke 18 opens with Jesus showing us the importance of prayer as a foundation for every Christian endeavor. Failure to bear good fruit in our lives is not a word, God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit failure. It's a prayer failure.

Christmas is a time to thank God for sending Jesus to earth. Not only did He come to die and shed His blood so our sins could be forgiven, but He also made it possible for us to bear good fruit by abiding in Him. **We can now enter boldly into the throne room of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.** Jesus made relationship with the Father possible so we can daily walk and talk with Him.

God never intended for you to figure life out on your own. He gave you the gift of prayer. Real prayer is not begging or pleading. Real prayer is based on the WORD of God where you ask, receive, and thank God for the answer by faith. Faith doesn't say, "Well I don't feel or see my healing, so I'd better ask again." No, faith says I've prayed, received, and already got it because "by Jesus' stripes I was healed."

The WORD is our handbook for success. It should guide us because it tells us His will. So, pray His promises today. Then, thank and praise Him because they are your promises right now. When you've done all to stand, STAND and thank God it's already YOURS!

The Acclamation of the King

LUKE 19

When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. "Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!" But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!" Luke 19:37-39 (NLT)

Suddenly, the angel was joined by the armies of heaven, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." Luke 2:13-15 (NLT)

The Triumphal Entry shares a powerful parallel with Jesus' birth in Luke. In both instances, a song of peace and glory is sung by those who recognize God's presence, provoking an immediate reaction from those who hear it.

At Jesus' birth, angels sang because humanity did not yet realize how good the Good News was. By the Triumphal Entry, the chorus changed to everyday people who had personally witnessed Jesus' miracles. While the shepherds responded to the angels with eager excitement, the Pharisees tried to silence the crowd's praises.

During this holiday season, many focus solely on the manger. But we have an even greater message to proclaim: **Jesus is not just a holiday decoration; He is the promised King**. Knowing the full scope of the gospel, we can joyfully praise the Savior who came and is coming again!

All Authority

LUKE 20

Despite multiple attempts, the religious leaders were unable to trap Jesus with their probing questions. Jesus saw right through them. Although they looked good on the outside, their hearts were far from him. They questioned his authority because they didn't believe he was the son of God. However, scripture teaches that Jesus was both fully God and fully man—the promised Messiah sent to restore mankind to right relationship with God.

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth." Likewise, in Philippians 2:9-11 it says, "Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

These scriptures lead to one simple question: What do you believe about Jesus? Is he just a baby in a manger we celebrate at Christmas time? Or maybe he's just a respected teacher or an icon. **Have you questioned his authority and doubted his lordship in your life?**

This Christmas, open your heart to the truth about Jesus: he's the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and he has all authority. Greater still, he came to this earth because he loves you. He lived a perfect life but suffered a sinner's death on a cross in your place. Today he offers you a free gift of Salvation. Will you receive it?

Unshakeable Plan of Salvation

LUKE 21

In Luke 21, Jesus speaks to his disciples about the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.

Everything on earth will be shaken; the Temple of God, the City of God, even the people of God. He tells the disciples they will be hated and thrown in prison. But, this is his exhortation to them; stand firm. When the end is near, and the nations are in anguish, he says to lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. When the earth is in turmoil and the powers in the heavens are shaken, then everyone will see the Son of Man returning in power and glory. Even as Jesus describes the destruction that is to come, he always leaves his followers with hope, because **as we follow Jesus, our outcome will always be victory.**

Jesus is clear that there is a time for loss, a time for judgment, a time to be firm and strong in our faith, a time to stay awake and pray, and a time to welcome Jesus as the Coming King, who is our redemption. For us today, we can read this chapter and trust that no matter what is happening in the world right now or in the coming years, **God has an unshakeable plan of salvation for his people, and that plan is fulfilled in Jesus.**

Luke 21:33- “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

Jesus Is Praying For You!

LUKE 22

Jesus tells Peter that Satan has asked to sift him as wheat, but Jesus has prayed for him that his faith would not fail. He then tells Peter that when he returns, he is to strengthen his brothers.

Have you ever experienced an all-out attack from Satan? A time when you felt surrounded, confused, and unable to see a way out? **Peter did.**

Jesus knew Peter was about to face one of the greatest spiritual attacks of his life. Peter confidently declared that he would never deny Jesus. Yet hours later, after Jesus was arrested, Peter denied Him three times.

Jesus knew the attack was coming before Peter did. Satan wanted to sift Peter like wheat. But before the attack came, Jesus was already praying for him. Jesus sees what is ahead of you. Nothing catches Him by surprise.

Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail. Peter failed, but his faith survived. His failure was not final!
Peter was restored and became a powerful leader who strengthened others.

You may experience confusion, doubt, temptation, or even failure. **But Jesus has not abandoned you, and your failure does not become your future.** You can be restored, strengthened, and used by God again. Take courage. Jesus sees your future, Jesus is praying for you, and the best is yet to come!

Greatest Gift Of All Time

LUKE 23

Christmastime is such a sweet season. Even though Christmas is always on the same date, it always seems to arrive at the most perfect time. Somehow each year, our weary world seems more poised than ever to receive the hope of Jesus' birth.

It's almost as if God has gifted us this unique understanding of our need for a Savior in a lost and seemingly increasingly dark world. In Luke 23, Jesus stands trial before Pilate, is put to death, and buried.

As Jesus stands before the mob, Pilate offers them a choice between Jesus and Barabbas, who was in prison for terrible crimes. The mob rejects Jesus and chooses Barabbas. The feeling of rejection is never fun. While he knew this would happen, I can only imagine how Jesus, whose love for us is beyond our human comprehension, felt in that moment.

Somehow, he kept loving, all the way up to his very last breath. Jesus gave himself as a sacrifice so that we could be healed, set free, and whole. **He is the best Christmas gift in the history of the world.**

This holiday season, as we take time to celebrate and share what is truly my favorite holiday, I challenge you to ask yourself these questions: Am I currently choosing anything over Jesus? Am I spending time with Him? Who can I share the priceless gift of Jesus with?

From Manger To Empty Tomb

LUKE 24

Luke began his Gospel with the priest Zechariah unable to give the priestly blessing to Israel (1:22 CSB). The people went away unblessed. This is how the Gospel begins: a priest with hands lifted, unable to speak out God's blessing to the people.
And 24 chapters later, Luke ends his Gospel.

"Then he led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. And while he was blessing them, he left them and was carried up into heaven." (24:50-51 CSB)
When the disciples last see Jesus, His nail-scarred hands are lifted over them, giving His blessing. The word the priest couldn't deliver, Jesus speaks Himself.

In Luke 2, an angel announced "good news of great joy" over a manger to shepherds who hadn't seen a thing yet. Then Luke shows the disciples after Jesus ascends to heaven.

"After worshiping him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they were continually in the temple praising God." (24:52-53 CSB) The promise made over a manger is laid hold of over the empty tomb.

Christmas isn't ultimately about remembering how Jesus came. It's about discovering why He came and who He is.

Zechariah finally found his voice, saying, "Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and provided redemption for his people" (1:68 CSB). Luke's Gospel begins with God visiting His people and ends with the promise that He will fill them. God with us, and then God in us.

And the angel said to them,
"Fear not, for behold,
I bring you good news of great joy
that will be for all the people.
For unto you is born this day
in the city of David a Savior,
who is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:10-11