

Week Five - *Jesus: Born to Shine in the Darkest Places*
Luke 2:1-20

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Spend time thinking about the preparations that you make for getting yourself or your family ready for Christmas. Which are some of your favorite activities?
2. Read Galatians 4:4-5 and then contemplate all that God brought about “in the fullness of time” in the second chapter of Luke to orchestrate the birth of his Son. Jot down what comes to mind.
3. God comes to his people in unexpected circumstances. Recall the ways God has displayed his faithfulness to you even in unexpected ways. How does it feel to reflect on that time?
4. Why was it important that both Joseph and Mary belonged to the “house and line of David”?
5. God’s message of salvation was for everyone, from the greatest to the least. The events surrounding the birth of Jesus in Luke 2 describe the angels of heaven announcing the “Good News” to the shepherds. What was this “Good News”?
6. Recall a time in your life where you were the first to learn of some good news. How did it make you feel? How did it feel to share it? What have you done this Christmas season to share the real “Good News”?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to fill you with his Spirit to proclaim his “peace” and to use words when necessary.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Read Luke 2:21-35. Yesterday we looked at circumstances surrounding Jesus’ birth. Today we will look into circumstances that help answer why he was born. What does it mean to be consecrated? What might you be asked to “consecrate” to God?
9. Describe all you can about Simeon.
10. Reading through the words of Simeon, what are the indications given as to why, or for what purpose, Jesus was born?
11. “The thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.” What do you think Simeon meant by this statement? How has Jesus revealed the thoughts of your heart in relation to his purpose and salvation?

12. What do you think Simeon meant when he said to Mary, “a sword will pierce your soul too”?
13. Close your FIFTEEN by praying that God would reveal to you the dark reaches within your heart where his light and his healing can bring his peace.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

14. Read Luke 2:36-40. Today we want to find out more regarding the reasons why Christ was born. Recall a time when you had to wait very long for something that you desired.
15. Yesterday’s text indicated that Simeon would not see death until he had seen the Messiah. Today describe all you can about Anna.
16. Anna had been in the temple every day fasting and praying. Yesterday we took a closer look at consecration. Read 1 Samuel 1:9-20. In addition to consecration, compare what qualities Anna and Hannah had in common.
17. What does it mean to “pour out your soul to the Lord”?
18. What do you think were the motives of the prayers of both Anna and Hannah?
19. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer that God would continually check your motives and that nothing that we ask for or desire would hinder our relationship with him.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

20. Read Luke 1:46-55 (Mary’s Song). Today we are going to spend some time reflecting on the incarnation (Word made Flesh) of Jesus as revealed in Mary’s Magnificat. Describe the attitudes of Mary described in her words.
21. For the sake of context, read Genesis 3:15. Where does Mary reference this promise in her “song”?
22. Mary’s words indicate a strong sense of God’s purpose, majesty, and wisdom. One might conclude she was very familiar with the Psalms based on the words and cadence of the Magnificat. What has helped you to get a greater sense of God’s purpose, majesty, and wisdom?
23. Jesus was born to bring light and salvation to the world. Additionally, he exposes the dark reaches of our hearts. Read Proverbs 30:8-9. What part of Mary’s song awakens us to be mindful of our own humility or lowliness?

24. Conclude your FIFTEEN today by finding a psalm to read and pray over.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

25. Read Luke 1:67-79 (Zechariah's Song). Today we will take a closer look at the prophesy of Zechariah. Zechariah was unable to speak when it was revealed that his wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to John the Baptist. Upon John's birth, Zechariah's mouth was opened, and the words that flowed out were prophetic! List all of what Zechariah said God would do through the Messiah.

26. What does it mean to you to "serve God without fear"?

27. What does it mean to you to have "rescue" and "salvation" from the hand of your "enemies"?

28. What does it mean to you to have Jesus "guide our feet into the path of peace"?

29. Spend the last few minutes of your FIFTEEN reflecting on the miracle of the incarnation (what it truly means that God is with us; Immanuel). We are known intimately by our heavenly Father. He desires what is best for us. Pray for trust as you continue to "pour out your soul" to God.