

Prayer Focus: December 2013

‘Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father’ (Philippians 2:1-11).

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow

Reflection

As we move towards the Christmas celebration of the coming of Jesus, it is good to remind ourselves that we celebrate the beginning of an experience, an opportunity for life. But this once-a-year celebration is not all there is. It marks an opportunity to experience a life-changing event – the possibility to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Because he provided a role model for our lives, and eventually died on a cross to be our Redeemer, we can live a life of forgiveness, hope and direction.

‘She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins’ (Matthew 1:21).

There’s no other name but this name,
And no other name will do.
There’s no other name but Jesus
For folk like me and you.
For no other name brings pardon
And sets everybody free,
There’s no other name but Jesus
For you and me.
(John Gowans, *The Song Book of The Salvation Army* 71, chorus)

Say, is there a name to live by?

Prayer

Jesus, we often struggle to live our lives in a meaningful and positive way. We worry about the challenges we face. We question the terrible things we see in our world and we fear for our children. We seek joy, healing and peace. We want freedom from the things that enslave us and yet, Lord, your Word tells us that the answers to these things are found in you. Jesus, in your holy name, help us to live in and through you. Amen.

Say, is there a name for meaning?

Prayer

Jesus, as we live through these days that culminate in the celebration of your birth, help us to understand the meaning you bring to our lives so that we seek your plan for us. Give us wisdom to guide those who look to us for help and direction. Help us to live in a way that shows your influence on our attitudes, decisions and capacity to love. As we pray for a hurting world, help us never to lose hope whilst actively responding to those in need. Amen.

Say, is there a name for pardon?

Prayer

Jesus, as we look on our world we see extremes – beauty tempered by the ugliness of man’s sin and its outworking. We ask that your beauty will be evident to others through our lives. Help us to live as a forgiven people, ready to forgive as we have been forgiven by you. We are mindful that without your forgiveness we would be limited in so many ways. Jesus, you came to this world as a child to bring peace and confidence, to strengthen faith and instil love. As we see so much that is wrong in our world, help us to recognise that the answers lie in our relationship with you. Jesus, may your love, peace and pardon be renewed in us, and may your people everywhere express love and peace through faith because of your pardoning grace. Amen.

There’s no other name but JESUS for you and me.

Prayer

Jesus, at this Christmastime we celebrate your coming to earth as a baby. Help us to reflect on how your presence impacts our lives. Renew us through your presence so that we may sing with the angels:

All glory in the highest,
Peace on earth, goodwill to men.