

# Week 3: Incarnation

## LOVE FOR NEIGHBOUR

The Good News that we proclaim is that God has taken care of everything in the salvation process. But why? 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that God desires that no one to be apart from Him. Throughout the Bible, we can see time and again how God chooses to use imperfect people like us to reach out to the people around us. Who are the people that you interact with throughout your week? God has placed you there so He can show His perfect and unconditional love to them!

### Feb 17: With

So the Word became human and made his home among us." John 1:14 (NLT)

Jesus is rightly called Immanuel – God with us (Matthew 1:23). The reality of the incarnation poignantly illustrates that Christianity is a "flesh and blood" faith. Jesus lived in a neighbourhood and was with people in the midst of their joy, pain and grief. He reminds us, as His disciples, that He will always be with us and sends us out to establish His Kingdom everywhere we go (Matthew 28:20). Although Jesus has ascended, He continues to be present in our world through us. Following Jesus' example, we are called to be a faithful presence in our homes, neighbourhoods and workplaces.

Lorem ipsum

\*Pray for a renewed awareness of God's presence with you and at work all around you.

\*Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything that is hampering your ability to be fully present with God, with fellow believers, or with your neighbours.

### Feb 18: Invitation

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ... " 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 (NIV)

Immediately after Philip responds to Jesus' "follow me" invitation, Philip extends an invitation to Nathanael to "come and see" (John 1:43-46). Good news is meant to be shared! We may not always feel comfortable being "an open book," but our lives are being read by those around us. The Holy Spirit is at work, transforming our hearts and making us a reflection of Christ. As a foretaste of the Kingdom, we extend an invitation to those around us to "come and see." Our lives are powerful illustrations of the importance of knowing Christ and experiencing the abundant life found only in Him.

\*Is your life an accurate reflection of Christ? Take time to confess areas of sin or struggle, and dedicate yourself to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

\*How open are you to sharing your life with others? Ask God to bring to mind those he would like you to develop deeper relationships with.

### Feb 19: Division

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Romans 16:17 (NIV)

Sin is at the root of relational brokenness. Our culture is deeply fractured and characterized by increasing levels of antagonism. People are quick to judge others based on labels and biases. Unfortunately, an "us versus them" mindset has too often kept Christians from being Christ-like in their interactions with those God has called them to love and reach with the Gospel. When Jesus combines loving God and loving our neighbours as the greatest commandment, He demonstrates that both are of paramount importance and inseparably linked (Matthew 22:36-40). God's intention is for love and unity to reign in the midst of diversity. We need to diligently guard against sinful attitudes and avoid "holy huddles" that drive a wedge between us and the people God loves.

\*Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal and deal with any strife or antagonisms in your relationships with others.

\*Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His heart for the people around you and to help you interact with others in God-honoring ways.

### Feb 20: Patience

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

The Parable of the Sower reminds us that our efforts to share the truth of the Gospel will yield mixed results. And, while hard to accept at times, the results are ultimately not our concern! God alone can bring about spiritual growth (1 Corinthians 3:7), as His Spirit draws men to Himself (John 6:44). Even when surrounded by hard hearts, our mandate remains unchanged - to patiently and faithfully witness for Christ, trusting that God is at work and His timing is perfect.

\*Ask God to be at work in your own life, "to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

\*God graciously invites us to partner with Him in His transformational work in the world. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you avoid the extremes of owning others' spiritual growth or abdicating responsibility for being a witness for Him.

## Feb 21: Freedom

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

We were created to be in relationship with God, yet God gave us a free will since true love only exists where there is choice. We are all free to choose to follow Jesus or reject Him. Jesus told His disciples they would experience rejection and hatred because of people's rejection of Him (Luke 10:16; John 15:18). Yet, Jesus modeled love and grace for those who rejected Him, even praying for His persecutors while dying for their sins on the cross.

As followers of Christ, our grace must extend even to those who are rejecting Him.

\*Ask forgiveness for when you have not responded to God's knock and give thanks for God's unfailing love and grace.

\*Reflect on how you interact with those who reject Christ or are antagonistic toward Christian values. Ask God to empower you to reflect Christ's love and grace to them.

## Feb 22: Opportunity

Pray...that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ...Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Colossians 4:5 (NIV)

Like Paul, we can pray for "open doors" in sharing the Gospel. God is at work in the lives of the people around us, and we need to be watching for the opportunities he gives us to be a witness of His truth, love, and grace. A willingness to engage is important, as we need to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks [us] to give the reason for the hope that [we] have" (1 Peter 3:15). Of greater importance, however, is the character of our interactions. What we say and what we do must reflect the character of Christ. We need to exude "gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15) and "let [our] conversation be always full of grace" (Colossians 4:6) as we "let [our] light shine before others," to God's glory (Matthew 5:16).

\*Pray for eyes to see opportunities to be a witness for Christ.

\*Ask God to help you be Christ-like in every interaction with others.

## Feb 23: Peace

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Romans 14:17, 19 (NIV)

Through Christ, we have peace with God (Romans 5:1). Jesus came to give us abundant life (John 10:10) - to restore the state of perfect wholeness and relational harmony found only in God's presence and covenantal relationship with His people. Known as "shalom" in the Old Testament (translated "peace"), this image persists in the New Testament concept of the Kingdom. Through Christ, we also have peace with one another. Ephesians 2 tells us that He preached peace to all and destroyed walls of division in order to create in Himself one new humanity being built together as a dwelling for His Spirit (14-22). Through Christ, we are also ambassadors of peace, tasked with sharing a message of reconciliation. God is making His appeal through us, calling people home (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). We are "sent ones" - sent to carry His presence and peace into the world.

\*Are you at peace with God, yourself, and others? Ask God to bring reconciliation wherever it is needed.

\*Ask God to use you as an instrument of His presence and peace in your home, workplace, neighbourhood, and community.

be with HIM  
be like HIM