

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

4 week Advent series

何解为圣诞节烦恼？

将临期系列



‘A voice of one calling:

“In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

- Isaiah 40:3-5 -

有声音呼喊着：

「要在旷野为耶和华预备道路，在沙漠为我们的上帝修直大道。

一切山洼都要填满，大小山冈都要削平；陡峭的要变为平坦，崎岖的必成为平原。耶和华的荣耀必然显现，凡有血肉之躯的都一同看见，因为这是耶和华亲口说的。」

以赛亚书40章3-5节

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Welcome to the silly season! Craziness, chaos, over-spending, angry carparks, long lines, unmet expectations... Have you ever thought, "Why bother with Christmas?" I acknowledge that this is a very Western, first world, consumeristic, description of Christmas - but for many of us, this is the Christmas world we battle with every year. And so it raises the question - if this is what Christmas is about, why bother?

In this Advent study, we are going to explore four reasons why we should bother with Christmas.

- Hope that changes our perspective
- Peace that provides comfort
- Joy that brings forth renewal
- Love that leads us to wonder

Hope is a vital way to start our Advent season, because a biblical worldview of hope sets for us an eternal perspective that is unshakable. For a Christian, even in the darkest places there is hope, because we have a God who sees us. We also have a God who knows us. We have an eternal future that is beyond our wildest dreams; one in which there is no more sickness or pain, everything is fully restored and whole. Just as it was meant to be from the start. But yes, sometimes (even at Christmas!), that really does feel a long way off! Come, Lord Jesus!

Advent is also a season in which we focus our attention on the fact that even if our eternal future feels like a long way off - God is still close by. He is certainly not distant from you or from me. He too desires that the beauty and majesty of heaven would consume the evils of this world. And so in this season we wait expectantly with him. Come, Lord Jesus!

May God's hope, peace, joy, and love fill your lives this Advent season as you focus your attention on Jesus - the One who is King of all and in control.

God bless you richly as you wait expectantly.

*Rev'd Scott Windred
Sunnybank Anglican*

何解为圣诞节烦恼？

欢迎来到愚蠢的季节！疯狂、混乱、过度消费、愤怒的停车场、排长龙、未满足的期望……你有没有想过，「何解为圣诞节烦恼？」我承认，这是对圣诞节的一种非常西方、第一世界、消费主义的描述——但对我们许多人来说，这就是我们每年与之抗争的圣诞节世界。因此这就提出了一个问题——如果这就是圣诞节的意义，为甚么还要为它烦恼呢？

在这个将临期的学习中，我们将探讨四个我们应该为圣诞节烦恼原因：

1. 「盼望」能改变我们的「观点」
2. 「平安」带来「安慰」
3. 「喜乐」带来「更新」
4. 「爱」让我们「反复思考」

「盼望」是开始我们将临期的重要方式，因为圣经的「盼望世界观」，为我们设定了不可动摇的永恒视角。对基督徒来说，即使在最黑暗的地方，也有盼望，因为我们有一位看见我们的上帝；我们也有一位认识我们的上帝。我们有一个永恒的未来，这是我们最异想天开的梦想之外的：一种不再有疾病或痛苦，一切都完全恢复和完整的状态，正如从一开始就注定的。但是，是的，有时（即使在圣诞节！），这确实让人感觉很遥远！来吧，主耶稣！

将临期也是我们将注意力集中在这样一个事实上的节期：即使我们感觉永恒的未来还很遥远，但上帝仍近。祂当然离你或我并不遥远。祂也渴望天国的美丽和威严能够消灭这个世界的邪恶。所以，这个节期我们和祂一起期待。来吧，主耶稣！

当您将注意力集中在耶稣身上时，愿上帝的盼望、平安、喜乐和爱充满您在这个将临期的生活——祂是万有之王并掌管一切。

当你满怀期待地等待时，上帝会丰盛地祝福你。

史葛云达牧师

Sunnybank圣公会圣巴拿巴堂

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Week 1 Hope: Perspective

Warming up:

Is your personality typically a 'cup-half-empty' or a 'cup-half-full'?

Read: Isaiah 64:1-9

1. In v.1, does Isaiah feel that God is close by or far away? What is Isaiah asking God to do?
2. In vv.3-4, what is Isaiah remembering? Why?
3. In vv.5-7, Isaiah asks "how can we be saved?" Why is he asking this question? What is he aware of?
4. What is significant about v.8? What might Isaiah mean by using this illustration?
5. In v.9, what reason does Isaiah give for God to forgive them? What do you think about this reason?
6. In vv.10-11, Isaiah shares about his current circumstances. Can you relate to Isaiah in what you see around us today?
7. Why do you think Isaiah asks the questions in v.12?

Rubber hits the road:

What is your response to the question, "how can we be saved?". How will the hope that you find in your Saviour Jesus change the way you live your life this week?

Prayer

Gracious God, how can we be saved apart from your amazing grace?

You sent your Son Jesus to save us, and for that we are forever thankful. We pray that you would humble our hearts so that we can see our true need for you. Please fill our hearts with hope as we think about the love that you have showered upon us. You are our Saviour and we find our rest in you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

何解为圣诞节烦恼？

Week 1 盼望: 观点

热身：

你的性格通常是「半杯空」（悲观）还是「半杯满」（乐观）？

阅读：以赛亚书 64:1-9

1. 在第 1 节中，以赛亚感觉上帝离得很近还是很远？以赛亚要求上帝做甚么？
2. 在 3-4 节中，以赛亚记得甚么？为甚么？
3. 在 5-7 节中，以赛亚问「我们还能得救吗？」，他为甚么问这个问题？他知道甚么？
4. 第 8 节有甚么重要意义？以赛亚用这个比喻有甚么意思？
5. 在第 9 节中，以赛亚给甚么理由让上帝饶恕他们？对于这个原因你有甚么看法？
6. 在第 10-11 节中，以赛亚分享了他目前的处境。你能从今天我们周围看到的事情中，找到以赛亚的影子吗？
7. 你认为以赛亚为何在第 12 节提出这些问题？

实践：

对于「我们还能得救吗？」这个问题，你有何响应？你在救主耶稣身上找到的盼望会如何改变你这周的生活方式？

祷告

仁慈的上帝，如果没有你奇异的恩典，我们怎能得救呢？你派遣你的儿子耶稣来拯救我们，为此我们永远地感谢你。我们祈求你谦卑我们的心，以致我们能看到我们对你的真正需要。当我们想到你对我们所倾注的爱时，请让我们的心中充满盼望。你是我们的救主，我们在你里面找到安息。奉耶稣的名祈求，阿门。

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Week 2 Peace: Comfort

Warming up:

What comforts you when you are upset? How do you comfort others when they are in need?

Read: Isaiah 40:1-11

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. What is the context of this passage? Why do God's people need comforting?
3. Why do you think Isaiah 40:3 is quoted at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Mark 1:3, Matt 3:3, Luke 3:4)? How is this verse comforting to God's people?
4. How does vv.6-8 challenge the way you view your relationship with God? But also provide comfort?
5. Isaiah 40 addresses three questions: Does God want to deliver us? Can He deliver us? Will He deliver us? How would you answer these question in the light of Jesus' birth and his coming again? And how is this a comfort to everyone?

Rubber hits the road:

How will the comfort and peace that you find in your Shepherd Jesus change the way you live your life this week? And how can you show this peace and comfort to someone?

Prayer

Merciful God, how can we ever thank you enough for forgiving our sins and restoring us as your people? You have truly spoken to us tenderly and have comforted us in our anxieties. We thank you for the peace that we find in your eternal word. Please help us this week to rest in your promises, and to always look to you for our comfort, strength, and protection. You are our Shepherd and we find our rest in you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

何解为圣诞节烦恼？

Week 2 平安: 安慰

热身：

当你难过的时候甚么可以安慰你？当别人有需要时，你如何安慰他们？

阅读：以赛亚书 40:1-11

1. 这段经文中甚么让你印象最深刻？
2. 这段经文的上文下理是甚么？为甚么上帝的子民需要安慰？
3. 你认为为甚么耶稣在传道之初就引用了以赛亚书 40:3（马可福音 1:3、马太福音 3:3、路加福音 3:4）？这节经文对上帝的子民有何安慰？
4. 第 6-8 节如何挑战你看待自己与上帝的关系的方式，但，又能提供安慰？
5. 以赛亚书第40 章提出了三个问题：上帝愿意拯救我们吗？祂能拯救我们吗？祂会拯救我们吗？根据耶稣的诞生和再临，你会如何回答这些问题？这对每个人来说如何是一种安慰？

实践：

你在大牧人耶稣身上找到的安慰与平安将如何改变你这周的生活方式？你怎样向别人展示这份平安与安慰呢？

祷告

仁慈的上帝，我们如何感谢你赦免我们的罪孽并恢复我们作为你的子民呢？你真切的温柔地对我们说话，安慰了我们的焦虑。

我们感谢祢在你永恒的话语中带给我们平安。

请帮助我们在本周中信守你的承诺，

并至终向你寻求安慰、力量和保护。

你是我们的大牧人，我们在你身上得享安息。

奉耶稣的名祈求，阿门。

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Week 3 Joy: Renewal

Warming up:

Have you ever had a relationship with a friend or family member that broke down? Have you then made up and renewed the friendship?

Read: Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. What kind of renewal is described in this passage?
3. What had Judah done to find themselves in this place with a rift between themselves and God?
4. How does this passage bring joy to the reader?
5. Jesus reads from this passage in the synagogue in Luke ch.4. what is he saying about himself?
6. How does the coming of Jesus mean joy and renewal for us both as individuals and as a community?

Rubber hits the road:

What are the rifts that exist between us and God? How can we use the Christmas message to always be conscious of the joy that our renewal through Jesus brings?

Prayer

Gracious God, we give you great thanks and praise that you have renewed and restored us to the fullness of life through Jesus our Lord. Fill us now with joy in believing this good news, and help us to always be conscious of your redeeming power. Help us as we look forward to your return when you will finally and completely renew the whole world. Amen

何解为圣诞节烦恼？

Week 3 喜乐: 更新

热身：

您是否曾与朋友或家人关系破裂？那么你们有重修旧好吗？

阅读：以赛亚书 61：1-4；8-11

1. 这段经文让你印象最深刻的是甚么？
2. 这段经文描述了甚么样的更新？
3. 犹大国做了甚么才发现他们与上帝之间的关系有裂痕吗？
4. 这篇文章如何带给读者喜乐？
5. 耶稣在路加福音第4章的会堂里读到了这段经文。祂在说甚么关于祂自己的事？
6. 耶稣的来临对我们个人和我们的小区来说如何意味着喜乐和更新？

实践：

我们与上帝之间存在哪些裂痕？我们怎样才能透过圣诞节信息来意识到耶稣带来更新而得的喜乐？

祷告：

仁慈的上帝，我们向祢致以最大的感恩和赞美，
因为祢透过我们的主耶稣更新并恢复了我们的生命的丰盛。

现在就让我们因相信这个好消息而充满喜乐，
并帮助我们时时刻刻觉察到祢的救赎力量。

求你帮助我们期待着祢的归来，届时祢将最终彻底更新整个世界。

阿门。

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

Week 4 Love: Wonder

Warming up:

When was the last time you were filled with wonder? What happened and why was it so exciting?

Read: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

1. What did David want to do for God? What did God decide to do for David? What does this show us about God's love and grace?
2. How does Jesus' first coming fulfil God's promises in this passage? How will his second coming bring them to completion?

Read: Psalm 89:1-4; 18-27

1. What fills the Psalmist with awe and wonder in this passage? Why is it so significant that Jesus was called the 'Son of David'?

Read: Luke 1:26-38

1. Why do you think God sent an angel to Mary? What filled Mary with wonder?
2. What aspects of Mary's character most impress you?

Rubber hits the road:

How can we share the wonder of the Biblical story of Christmas with our friends and family this year?

Prayer

Almighty creator, everliving God, we give you thanks and praise for sending your Son Jesus into our world. Thank you Jesus for living with us and dying for us. Thank you Holy Spirit for your life giving ways. Flow through us this Christmas and help us to share the wonder of being your people. Amen.

何解为圣诞节烦恼？

Week 4 爱: 反复思考

热身：

你上一次感到「反复思考」是甚么时候？发生了甚么事以及为甚么如此令人兴奋？

阅读：撒母耳记下 7:1-11,16

1. 大卫想为上帝做甚么？上帝决定要为大卫做甚么？这如何向我们展示了上帝的爱和恩典？
2. 耶稣的第一次降临如何应验了上帝在这段经文中的应许？祂的第二次降临将如何使他们成就？

阅读：诗篇 89:1-4； 18-27

1. 在这段经文中，有甚么让诗篇作者充满敬畏和惊奇？为甚么耶稣被称为「大卫的子孙」如此重要？

阅读：路加福音 1:26-38

1. 你认为上帝为甚么要派天使给马利亚？是甚么让马利亚需要反复思考。
2. 马利亚性格的哪些方面给你最深刻的印象？

实践：

今年我们如何与我们的朋友和家人分享圣经圣诞节故事的奇妙？

祷告：

全能的创造主、永生的上帝，我们感谢赞美，

因为祢派遣的儿子耶稣来到我们的世界。

感谢耶稣祢与我们一同活着并为我们而死。

感谢圣灵赐予生命道路，

在今年圣诞节感动我们并帮助我们分享成为祢的子民的奇迹。阿门。

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Romans 16:25-27

惟有上帝能照我所传的福音和所讲的耶稣基督，并照历代以来隐藏的奥秘的启示，坚固你们。这奥秘如今显示出来，而且按着永生上帝的命令，藉众先知的书指示万民，使他们因信而顺服。愿荣耀，借着耶稣基督，归给独一无二全智的上帝，直到永远。阿们！

罗马书16章25-27节



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