

WHY BOTHER WITH CHRISTMAS?

4 week Advent series

何解為聖誕節煩惱？

將臨期系列



‘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 -

有聲音呼喊著：

「要在曠野為耶和華預備道路，在沙漠
為我們的上帝修直大道。

一切山窪都要填滿，大小山岡都要削
平；陡峭的要變為平坦，崎嶇的必成為
平原。耶和華的榮耀必然顯現，凡有血
肉之軀的都一同看見，因為這是耶和華
親口說的。」

以賽亞書 40章3-5節

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*

何解為聖誕節煩惱？

歡迎來到愚蠢的季節！瘋狂、混亂、過度消費、憤怒的停車場、排長龍、未滿足的期望……你有沒有想過，「何解為聖誕節煩惱？」我承認，這是對聖誕節的一種非常西方、第一世界、消費主義的描述——但對我們許多人來說，這就是我們每年與之抗爭的聖誕節世界。因此這就提出了一個問題——如果這就是聖誕節的意義，為什麼還要為它煩惱呢？

在這個將臨期的學習中，我們將探討四個我們應該為聖誕節煩惱原因：

1. 「盼望」能改變我們的「觀點」
2. 「平安」帶來「安慰」
3. 「喜樂」帶來「更新」
4. 「愛」讓我們「反覆思考」

「盼望」是開始我們將臨期的重要方式，因為聖經的「盼望世界觀」，為我們設定了不可動搖的永恆視角。對基督徒來說，即使在最黑暗的地方，也有盼望，因為我們有一位看見我們的上帝；我們也有一位認識我們的上帝。我們有一個永恆的未來，這是我們最異想天開的夢想之外的：一種不再有疾病或痛苦，一切都完全恢復和完整的狀態，正如從一開始就注定的。但是，是的，有時（即使在聖誕節！），這確實讓人感覺很遙遠！來吧，主耶穌！

將臨期也是我們將注意力集中在這樣一個事實上的節期：即使我們感覺永恆的未來還很遙遠，但上帝仍近。祂當然離你或我並不遙遠。祂也渴望天國的美麗和威嚴能夠消滅這個世界的邪惡。所以，這個節期我們和祂一起期待。來吧，主耶穌！

當您將注意力集中在耶穌身上時，願上帝的盼望、平安、喜樂和愛充滿您在這個將臨期的生活——祂是萬有之王並掌管一切。

當你滿懷期待地等待時，上帝會豐盛地祝福你。

史葛雲達牧師

Sunnybank聖公會聖巴拿巴堂

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.

何解為聖誕節煩惱?

Week 1 盼望: 觀點

熱身：

你的性格通常是「半杯空」（悲觀）還是「半杯滿」（樂觀）？

閱讀：以賽亞書 64:1-9

1. 在第 1 節中，以賽亞感覺上帝離得很近還是很遠？以賽亞要求上帝做什麼？
2. 在 3-4 節中，以賽亞記得什麼？為什麼？
3. 在 5-7 節中，以賽亞問「我們還能得救嗎？」，他為什麼問這個問題？他知道什麼？
4. 第 8 節有什麼重要意義？以賽亞用這個比喻有甚麼意思？
5. 在第 9 節中，以賽亞給什麼理由讓上帝饒恕他們？對於這個原因你有甚麼看法？
6. 在第 10-11 節中，以賽亞分享了他目前的處境。你能從今天我們周圍看到的事情中，找到以賽亞的影子嗎？
7. 你認為以賽亞為何在第 12 節提出這些問題？

實踐：

對於「我們還能得救嗎？」這個問題，你有何回應？你在救主耶穌身上找到的盼望會如何改變你這週的生活方式？

禱告

仁慈的上帝，如果沒有你奇異的恩典，我們怎能得救呢？

你派遣你的兒子耶穌來拯救我們，為此我們永遠地感謝你。

我們祈求你謙卑我們的心，以致我們能看到我們對你的真正需要。

當我們想到你對我們所傾注的愛時，請讓我們的心中充滿盼望。

你是我們的救主，我們在你裡面找到安息。

奉耶穌的名祈求，阿門。

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 questions 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.

何解為聖誕節煩惱?

Week 2平安：安慰

熱身：

當你難過的時候甚麼可以安慰你？當別人有需要時，你如何安慰他們？

讀經：以賽亞書 40:1-11

1. 這段經文中甚麼讓你印象最深刻？
2. 這段經文的上文下理是甚麼？為甚麼上帝的子民需要安慰？
3. 你認為為甚麼耶穌在傳道之初就引用了以賽亞書 40:3（馬可福音 1:3、馬太福音 3:3、路加福音 3:4）？這節經文對上帝的子民有何安慰？
4. 第 6-8 節如何挑戰你看待自己與上帝的關係的方式，但，又能提供安慰？
5. 以賽亞書 第40 章提出了三個問題：上帝願意拯救我們嗎？祂能拯救我們嗎？祂會拯救我們嗎？根據耶穌的誕生和再臨，你會如何回答這些問題？這對每個人來說如何是一種安慰？

實踐：

你在大牧人耶穌身上找到的安慰與平安將如何改變你這週的生活方式？你怎樣向別人展示這份平安與安慰呢？

禱告

仁慈的上帝，

我們如何感謝你赦免我們的罪孽並恢復我們作為你的子民呢？

你真切的溫柔地對我們說話，安慰了我們的焦慮。

我們感謝祢在你永恆的話語中帶給我們平安。

請幫助我們在本週中信守你的承諾，並至終向你尋求安慰、力量和保護。

你是我們的大牧人，我們在你身上得享安息。

奉耶穌的名祈求，阿門。

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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

何解為聖誕節煩惱?

Week 3喜樂：更新

熱身：

您是否曾與朋友或家人關係破裂？那麼你們有重修舊好嗎？

閱讀：以賽亞書 61：1-4；8-11

1. 這段經文讓你印象最深刻的是甚麼？
2. 這段經文描述了甚麼樣的更新？
3. 猶大國做了甚麼才發現他們與上帝之間的關係有裂痕嗎？
4. 這篇文章如何帶給讀者喜樂？
5. 耶穌在路加福音第4章的會堂裡讀到了這段經文。祂在說甚麼關於祂自己的事？
6. 耶穌的來臨對我們個人和我們的社區來說如何意味著喜樂和更新？

實踐：

我們與上帝之間存在哪些裂痕？我們怎樣才能透過聖誕節信息來意識到耶穌帶來更新而得的喜樂？

禱告：

仁慈的上帝，我們向祢致以最大的感恩和讚美，因為祢透過我們的主耶穌更新並恢復了我們的生命的豐盛。現在就讓我們因相信這個好消息而充滿喜樂，並幫助我們時時刻刻覺察到祢的救贖力量。求你幫助我們期待著祢的歸來，屆時祢將最終徹底更新整個世界。阿門。

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.

何解為聖誕節煩惱?

Week 4愛：反覆思考

熱身：

你上一次感到「反覆思考」是甚麼時候？發生了甚麼事以及為甚麼如此令人興奮？

閱讀：撒母耳記下 7:1-11,16

1. 大衛想為上帝做甚麼？上帝決定要為大衛做甚麼？這如何向我們展示了上帝的愛和恩典？
2. 耶穌的第一次降臨如何應驗了上帝在這段經文中的應許？祂的第二次降臨將如何使他們成就？

閱讀：詩篇 89:1-4；18-27

1. 在這段經文中，有甚麼讓詩篇作者充滿敬畏和驚奇？為甚麼耶穌被稱為「大衛的子孫」如此重要？

閱讀：路加福音 1:26-38

1. 你認為上帝為甚麼要派天使給馬利亞？是甚麼讓馬利亞需要反覆思考。
2. 馬利亞性格的哪些方面給你最深刻的印象？

實踐：

今年我們如何與我們的朋友和家人分享聖經聖誕節故事的奇妙？

禱告：

全能的創造主、永生的上帝，我們感謝讚美，
因為祢派遣的兒子耶穌來到我們的世界。

感謝耶穌祢與我們一同活著並為我們而死。

感謝聖靈賜予生命道路，

在今年聖誕節感動我們並幫助我們分享成為祢的子民的奇蹟。阿門。

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

惟有上帝能照我所傳的福音和所講的耶穌基督，並照歷代以來隱藏的奧祕的啟示，堅固你們。這奧祕如今顯示出來，而且按著永生上帝的命令，藉眾先知的書指示萬民，使他們因信而順服。願榮耀，藉著耶穌基督，歸給獨一全智的上帝，直到永遠。阿們！

羅馬書16章25-27節



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