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WEEK 9 | When Life was Born

PRAYER

Our Loving Father, help us to see that you are with us. Nothing is too difficult, too messy, or too dirty for you. Jesus came to give us the gift of eternal life through the salvation that only you, our Heavenly Father, can give when we believe in your son, repent of our sins, and confess Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

That first Christmas, you gave us the gift of hope, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Thank you, Father, for your immeasurable gift. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

(Prayer extract from Hope Bellinger: Advent Prayers)

WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

Have you ever had something (an object) break down on you at a crucial time when you needed it? What was it, and what happened?

NOTES

WORD

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

[MATTHEW 1:18-25](#)

Imagine Joseph, engaged to be married to his young bride, Mary, only to find out that she was pregnant. His immediate thought would have been of her unfaithfulness, and as he was doubting the possibility of his marriage to her, considering all the cultural baggage, he, too, is told by God not to fear, because the Holy Spirit was the baby's father.

Imagine the cultural weight that would have been on both Joseph and Mary at this time. Pregnant Mary and Joseph not the father in a small town where communal living was the norm. Their reputation would have taken a major hit, but when they consider that the child in the womb is indeed the hope of the world, their obedience is seen in its beautiful context.

During this festive season as we reflect on the birth of Christ, we find hope in very trying times. Much like Joseph, we recognise the Saviour of the world is far more powerful than any circumstance we could ever face.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your hopefulness for the future that lies ahead for you and for the world around you. Why have you rated yourself this way?
2. How would you define 'hope' in your own words? Based then on your definition, do you think there is any hope for the world? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think the name, Immanuel, is significant? Do you believe that God is with you? If so, how do you sense him? If not, would you like to know he is with you?
4. Joseph names the baby, Jesus, which literally means, "God saves". Why is this name important?
5. Given the circumstances, Joseph is radically obedient (as is Mary, for that matter). What does radical obedience look like in your life? Do you consider yourself radically obedient to God? Why or why not?
6. How is your relationship with God? If you do not have one, would you like to have one? Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer with them:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and I invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAYER LIST