



## Thought for the Week

### GOD WANTS TO BE WITH US

It would be easy to think that Christmas is all about gifts, family being together, peace on earth and goodwill towards man. While they are all great ideals, the heart of the Christmas message is that God, the awesome creator of the universe, desperately wants to have a relationship with you. God sent Jesus to be born as a little baby in order to fulfill His plan of redemption and reconciliation – a plan He had right from the moment Adam and Eve first sinned and were separated from God. This plan, motivated by God's grace, mercy and love was to give us Jesus so that He could live with us, die for us and defeat death by being raised again. By doing this Jesus paid the penalty for our sins and smashed the barrier between us and God, making it possible for us to be reunited with Him. The Bible says that God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day in the Garden of Eden. Jesus was born because he wanted to renew that kind of intimate fellowship with us. During the Christmas season we often sing the classic carol, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," but have you ever thought about what this familiar song means? The lyrics are based on the biblical prophecy from Isaiah 14:7 which says, "The virgin will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel, which means 'God with Us'." God gave Jesus to mankind as the very first and very best Christmas present ever. The Apostle Paul understood the value of this gift when he wrote, "And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:18)

Because of the gift of Jesus Christ, God has made it possible for us to be in joyful fellowship with Him forever – just as He planned at the very beginning. "I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." (Revelation 21:3-4) This is the glorious news and promise of the gospel that we have to share with everyone. So, even if not everything seems to be as good as it could be this Christmas, I encourage you to still find time to remember the amazing gift we have in Christ. May you have a very merry Christmas knowing that God loves you and wants to be with you forever. May you know the presence of your Heavenly Father in a special way during this season. And may you share the good news of the gift of Jesus Christ with as many others as you can.

God bless, Pastor John.

## Prayer Points

- That the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts with the love, joy and power of Christ.
- For the salvation of all your family members and friends who don't know Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
- That there be bread for the hungry, homes for the homeless, love for the unlovable and healing for those struggling with pain and illness.
- For peace to return to Israel, Gaza, Ukraine and many area of conflict in our world.

## What's on?



If you would like to know more about our Home Groups, contact Pastor John 0408 402 476

### MONDAY

5PM Walking Soccer

BIRTHDAYS: Today Dianne Eden, 19th Judith Howland

### CHRISTMAS CARDS

Matti Van Der Harst will be selling her beautiful home made Christmas cards over the next two Sundays. Proceeds from the sale of the cards will go to missions.

### CONGRATULATIONS

To Harrison and Jess on their announcement that they are expecting baby number 3. I am sure Elijah and Ewan are going to love playing with their baby sister or brother (it will be exciting to see what God has planned).

### A BRAND NEW HOLIDAY SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Over the last few Christmas holiday seasons, our kids have had the pleasure of earning their 'crazy money' on Sunday mornings, so that they could go shopping at the Promised Land Plaza. In 2024 the kids will get to enjoy a whole new shopping experience at Bethlehem Bargains. This will all happen on the last Sunday of the school holidays, so kids make sure you come each week to earn as many points as you can.

### CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE—NEXT SUNDAY

Next Sunday is going to be an amazing day of worship. It begins with our worship service at 9am and it will conclude with our Christmas Eve celebration and supper, starting at 6pm. Please keep that date in your calendars and it would be great if you could bring along a plate to share for supper. There are flyers and tracts in the foyer if you would like to take some to invite your neighbours, family and friends.

### WELCOME GIDEONS

A big welcome to Norm Fuller from Gideon's Australia. We are looking forward to hearing about the amazing work of Gideon's both in Australia and across the world.

### NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

We are having a party at CBBC to help us see in 2024. It all starts at 7pm and will go to 12.15pm (or anytime in between depending on your stamina). Everyone is invited and encouraged to bring a plate of food to share for snacking and supper, and a board game to play with. We will also be setting up the table tennis tables and turning on the aircons to make sure we have a great time.