



English version

Christmas Advent Booklet 2021



Fear not! God with us.

Emmanuel – Christ's promise of His presence – supersedes our fear which arises due to the dynamic of life. God's commitment to always be present in life's every season provides us with no reason to give in to fear, to feel intimidated, or to be paralyzed. May this verse *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* (Isa. 41:10) uphold our steps as we embark through this journey of life. God's promises bring **unwavering hope, overwhelming peace, contagious joy and perfect love!**

This year's Advent encourages us to overcome fear by embracing the good news that God is with us through Christ who brings hope, peace, joy and love.

HOPE
PEACE
JOY
LOVE

Steps to use

Practical Steps to use this booklet:

- Set aside time and open our heart towards God's Words
- Pray for Holy Spirit to soften our heart
- Read the devotional and the Bible verses mentioned
- Pause to ponder on God's Words guided by the Reflection Questions
- Write down some application points, the things I ought to do to express my obedience to God's Words
- Pray according to the Prayer Points
- End with a prayer expressing our surrender to obey God's Words in concrete actions

TIPS

Advent I 28 Nov - 4 Dec 2021

STRONG HOPE

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

In the midst of Covid-19 pandemic challenges, some of us may develop a tendency to be fearful, worried, apathetic, and even lose hope. The Israelites experienced the same feeling, especially the Kingdom of Judah when they were conquered by the enemy.

In Isaiah 9:1-5, the Kingdom of Judah under the reign of King Ahaz was subjugated and was in despair as they were defeated by the Assyrians. The people were suffering and were in distress, hoping for someone to rescue them. God sent Isaiah to prophesize the arrival of Messiah, (*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*) who will liberate His people from sufferings and from the enemy's oppression.

The prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus Christ came to the world. *"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord"* (Luk. 2:11). Matthew Henry underscored, "Christ who was born and sent to us provided a firm foundation for our hope and is a source of joy in this distressed and frightening times" (*Matthew Henry Commentary. Book of Isaiah 1-39*). Christ is our foundation of hope because He is God's incarnation as human (Joh. 1:1, 14). In Him is no sin, but he was crucified to bear our sins (Rom. 5:8, 2Co. 5:21). By the grace of God, we were justified and saved through faith (Rom. 3:24, Eph 2:8-9). Now we have a firm hope in Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews emphasized, *"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain"* (Heb 6:19). Anchor represents firmness and hope in Christ. Our hope in Christ is an assurance that God will fulfil His redemption covenant in this present time and coming future as He is a faithful God.

Advent season is the waiting time in which our heart looks to the future - the second arrival of Christ to bring us to heaven. But Advent also invites to look backwards - to Christ's works which have been fulfilled. Advent also brings our vision to the current moment - a life enjoying salvation, joy, love, and peace in Christ. Hence when we face life's challenges, do not get easily despaired, upset and disappointed with God. Continue to believe, be faithful and hope in God as Jesus Christ will surely be with us always and we can do all things through Him who gives us strength (Mat. 28:20, Phi. 4:13). Hold firm to the anchor - Jesus Christ, and all our fear and worries will disappear, replaced by peace.

Reflection Question:

List down the problems that cause you to worry, to be fearful, and to lose hope. After you read and meditate on God's Words, how do you think you can cope with them?

Prayer Points:

- Be grateful to God for the hope and the assurance of salvation that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Pray for yourself, your family, Pastors, Preachers, Elders, Deacons and church members who are facing difficulties so that they will be strengthened and remain hopeful in Jesus Christ.
- Pray for country leaders and the people to strive together to prevent further transmission of Covid virus as well as for the speedy recovery of the economy.

“Without Christ there is no hope”

- Charles Spurgeon -

HOPE

Advent II 5 - 11 Des 2021

TRUE PEACE

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

John. 14:27

Christmas is synonymous with the word 'peace'. However, some Christians do not experience peace as they are celebrating Christmas. The absence of peace can be caused by various problems that seems unsolvable, by critical illnesses, conflicts with family, job insecurity, as well as loneliness – believing that no one could understand our feeling. Our hearts no longer feel peaceful as our nights are riddled with insomnia and constant worry. Does Christmas peace really exist or it is just a jargon? How can our hearts be tranquil while our surroundings are tumultuous? Many people tend to confuse the definition of peace: peace as life without problems, life that is secure and smooth. However, there is no such permanent condition throughout our lives, resulting in us yearning for the non-existent.

True peace does not depend on external situation, but on who lives within our lives (Joh. 14:27). The only individual who provides true peace is the Lord Jesus who is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). True peace occurs when Jesus came to the world to let us (who were God's enemy) have peace with God (Rm 5:1). We will never have true peace if Jesus is not within us. We will always feel empty and anxious even though we have every other thing.

True peace we will experience when we submit to the Prince of Peace, and when we do not use our strength to face challenges. God knows the situation surrounding us often causes His children to be terrified and discouraged, hence God tells us to cast all your anxieties and pray to God, the Provider of Peace (Phi. 4:6-7; 1Pe. 5:7). We can sense true peace when we cast all our anxieties and trust in God who holds our lives. Christmas is synonymous to peace because Christ is present. Without Christ, there is no true peace.

Reflection Question:

What worries do you have at this moment? Have you entrusted them all to God?

Prayer Points:

- Disclose your personal problems to God
- Pray for three people whom you know who are facing problems
- Pray for God's church so that they keep preaching the peace of Christ to the society

“The peace of God is not the absence of fear. It, in fact, is in His presence”

- Timothy Keller -

PEACE

Advent III 12 - 18 Des 2021

CONTAGIOUS JOY

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you”

Luke. 2:10-11

These past two years have been difficult as they are filled with fear and anxiety. Having fear is humane, however the Bible stresses that living with fear is not a Christian lifestyle which God favours. If we were to glance through the Bible, we will find that the phrase “Do not be afraid.” appears 365 times. This clearly indicates that God want Christians 'every day in the 365 days of a year' to not fret.

The Christmas message clearly states: *“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you”* (Luk. 2:10-11). The incarnation of Christ conveys the message 'Do not be afraid'. 'Great joy' has arrived in the world gripped with fear.

Joy is God's gift of Christmas, sent down to Earth from Heaven. Why joy? Because since humanity fell into sin, their lives have been filled with fear and despair. Humans need joy. And Christmas provides this true joy - once and for all, from the Holy Infant. This joy flows from Bethlehem to our lives today. And this joy shall continue to flow to others through our lives.

Joy does not belong to an individual which is constraint and confined. It will 'transmit' and flow to the heart of others who live without Christ and in fear. This is the testimony of Christmas joy. This is contagious joy.

Contagious joy is not about showing smiles on our faces, but about us being completely immersed in the *real joy in Christ*. Do not be afraid anymore because God is Emmanuel. He is in our heart, and real joy drives out all fear. It penetrates out from the hearts. It is contagious. It is powerful. Enjoy and bring in joy in all its splendour.

From today, immerse your heart in the Joy of Christmas. Set aside on Christmas Eve. Be grateful for this joy. Make commitment to bring in and to spread this joy through your life. Experience serenity and peace in your everyday life. Show your smile more, a smile that comes out of a pure heart where the Holy Infant dwells, so that, through your life, people will be attracted to the Holy Infant. Spread your joy, *a contagious joy*.

Reflection Question:

When was the last time this joy in your heart flowed and influenced those who are close to you?

Prayer Points:

- Pray that God provides strength to rejoice in this year's Christmas
- Pray that through ourselves, the others around us will also experience the joy in Christ
- Pray that through Christians the world in fear could experience the joy and peace of Christmas

*“Peace with God, peace with others,
and peace in your own heart”*

- Rick Warren -

JOY

Advent IV 19 - 23 Des 2021

PERFECT LOVE

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

1John. 4:10

There is a proverb, *"There is only one happiness in this life, to love and be loved."* To be loved is everyone's wish, because when we are loved, our deepest need is fulfilled. This makes life meaningful. This coincides with a song lyric *"But in fact, I'm a nobody...I just want you to love me as I am...I'm just someone who wants to be loved"*. Especially if the love comes from a person who is sincere.

Christmas is an expression of divine love. This abstract love exists in space and time in the form of Christ (Joh. 3:16). God could express His love through other symbols that are more spectacular. It is easy for Him to arrange the clouds to form words reflecting His love for the world. It is also not difficult for Him to let all the creatures produce fathomable sound to express

His love for the world. However, that is not God's way, instead He used the extreme method of incarnating Christ to the Earth to fulfil His salvation work through death on the Calvary – the pinnacle where His love is demonstrated! In short, Christmas proclaims that God loves us, and we are His beloved (1Joh. 4:10). This, of course, is good news to us. We, who are fragile, filled with sin and failure, are being loved by God through His perfect love who brings salvation (Rom. 5:8; 1Joh. 4:17-19). Moreover, we will not be separated from His love, whether it is by persecution, suffering, death, nor any powers (Rom. 8:38-39). No power is able to separate us from His love, and no force could drive out His love for us. Our lives will always be in the embrace of His love eternally. Being conscious that I'm His beloved and that I will always be embraced by His love will provide a reason for us not to be overwhelmed by fear, because there is no fear in love (1Joh. 4:18).

Christmas is the moment to prove that God's perfect love is within us, by flowing it to our surroundings through concrete actions (1Joh. 4:12, love in action). Because the "perfect love" is God's love which is expressed when we love one

another. Perfect meaning it has reached its objective. The love that we have received is not to be kept, but to be expressed without constraint so that it touches many lives. Think of one action to show love towards one another and do it.

Reflection Question:

To what extent has the divine love killed my ego and caused our lives to be overflowed with goodness to others?

Prayer Points:

- Be thankful that God has loved us with His perfect love
- Pray that every church member will have the courage to perform kindness to one another as a way to express love
- Pray that the church will continue to be a channel of blessings through their service or ministry

“Perfect love is love that does not die on the vine. It’s love that comes to fruition.”

- John Piper -

Christmas Eve In Family

Friday, 24 Dec 2021

17.00 WIB / 18.00 SG
via Youtube channel
 [GII Hok Im Tong](#)

Worship together with your family
Prepare candles for candlelight

Follow up with dinner and activities with your family.

Liturgy and guide can be downloaded via this link : bit.ly/christmasevegii



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