

STUDY GUIDE

O Come
Let Us
Adore Him

Rejoicing
in the
Advent of Christ



grace church

CHRISTMAS SERIES 2024

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|--------|-------------------------|
| 12/1 | Luke 1:26-56 |
| 12/8 | Matthew 1:18-25 |
| 12/15 | Luke 2:8-20 |
| 12/22 | Matthew 2:1-12 |
| 12/24 | John 1:14-18 |
| 12/29 | 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 |
| 1/5/25 | Revelation 21:1-7 |

INTRODUCTION: “O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL”

Christmas carols resonate deeply with many of us. Combine beautiful words with touching nostalgia, and play it during a season of such warmth around the holidays (not literally, here in Ohio) – that is the formula for music that will engage us on a deep, emotional level.

Though trying to pick favorites is always a near-futile task in these matters, one of my favorite Christmas carols is “O Come All Ye Faithful”. We do not actually know exactly who wrote it, though it has been attributed to many people throughout the years. What we do know are the beautiful words to this beloved song.

*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

The song captures something of the appropriate response to the Christmas story: joyful and triumphant. The Christmas story is the triumph of God (and, therefore, of His people) in the arrival of the Messiah, and the response for God’s people ought to be profound joy. This was, in fact, the response seen all throughout the Christmas story in Scripture. When Mary gave praise to God for conceiving this child, she cried out, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46-47). When the shepherds returned from seeing the baby Jesus, they went away “glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen” (Luke 2:20). When the wise men saw the star in the sky leading them to the

promised child, “they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (Matthew 2:10), and upon seeing him, “they fell down and worshipped him” (Matthew 2:11). All throughout the Christmas story is the theme of joy, triumph, worship, adoration.

*God of God, Light of Light,
Lo, He abhors not the virgin’s womb;
Very God, begotten not created;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

Yet this rejoicing is rooted in who the child in the manger was: God, in the flesh. This carol continues by putting to song the words of the Nicene Creed, one of the most beautiful documents ever written. Developed to summarize Biblical teaching by defending against heresies that denied Jesus was both truly God and truly man, the Creed says that Jesus is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man”. The song reminds us of what the Creed states, which itself reminds us of what the Scripture teaches: the child in the manger is God Himself. Jesus is not just a demi-god, nor divided between divinity and humanity; He is truly God, the eternal Son, worthy of all worship. The reason why the theme of worship runs throughout the Christmas story is because the child in the manger is the God who is worthy of all worship.

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heav’n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!*

*O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

The song then reminds us how all the heavenly host gives due worship to God. We remember that on that wonderful night in Bethlehem so many years ago, as the shepherds watched their sheep in fields outside the city, the sky was suddenly filled with angels. The host of heaven took to the skies to shout the glory of the Lord: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:14). This Lord Jesus deserves the praise of earth and heaven, for He made all things and rules all things – and, at Christmas, became man to be with us and redeem us. The only proper response to this is worship. The song calls the heavenly host to “sing in exultation”, which might as well be another way of saying “joyful and triumphant”. To exult in something is to take great joy in it, to rejoice, most often connected to a great triumph or victory. Christmas was a moment of great joy, but also a moment of great triumph. So sing, all the host of heaven! God deserves all praise.

*Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv’n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

But we would be missing the point of Christmas if we stopped at the host of heaven rejoicing in this triumph, for the whole point is for us to rejoice in the good news. The song calls us to “greet Thee”, placing ourselves alongside

those first eyewitnesses 2,000 years ago. What is our response to Christmas? It ought to be the same as Mary and Joseph, the same as the shepherds, the same as the angels, the same as the wise men – it ought to be rejoicing.

That is what we are going to explore this year in the weeks leading up to (and after) Christmas: rejoicing in Christ. As the song says, “O come, let us adore Him”, and that is precisely what we intend to do. Each Sunday, we will explore a different aspect of the Christmas story, seeing how it calls us to rejoice in our God.

We will join Mary in rejoicing in God’s faithfulness. We will be reminded through Joseph to rejoice in God’s salvation. We will sit with the shepherds as we’re told to rejoice in the glory of God. We will remember the wise men, and with them rejoice in the reign of God. On Christmas Eve, we will remember the words of the apostle John and rejoice in the presence of God.

But then after Christmas, we will remember that Advent is not just about looking back at the first coming of Christ, but looking forward to the second coming of Christ. He is coming again! And because of that, Christians can rejoice even now in the return of God, and we can rejoice in our relationship with God – forever.

So come, church: let us adore Him! Worship is the goal of Christmas, after all.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Our prayer is that the Lord will use this study in the life of our church to stir our hearts to rejoice in Christ today, anchored in looking back and looking forward.

In the pages that follow, you will find a series of questions accompanying each week of our sermon series. There will be questions for you to answer based on your own personal study of the text, and further questions to reflect on and discuss in groups.

In order for you to get the most out of this series, we encourage you to read the text and write down your observations before listening to the sermon each Sunday. Devote time in the week leading up to Sunday morning to explore the text for yourself.

You will notice that each week asks the same basic questions:

- What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?
- What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?
- What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?
- What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?
- What is one question you have about this passage?

These questions form a good introductory tactic to studying the Bible. We often rush to application (what it means for my life) without considering what the text really says, and we often read the Bible as if it is primarily about us when it is really about God. So we want you to begin each week by learning about God and the gospel, then by considering what the text says about us, before then moving to what the text calls us to. Remember: application is not simply what we do; application of the Bible is holistic: it is about what we do, say, think, believe, and love.

There will also be opportunities for you to write, and ask, questions that arise during your study. We encourage you to write down these questions, and then share them. There are

two ways to share them. First, you can share them with your Grace Group, and lean on the collective wisdom of others to aid. Second, you can scan the QR code you see here, and write out your question. Our staff and elders will be answering your questions throughout the series, and you can find these answers primarily on our social media pages.



Finally, there are a handful of questions designed to be reflected on and discussed with others. Perhaps your Grace Group will consider discussing them, or maybe you can talk about them with your family, or pull together a small group of trusted friends to walk through this series together. However it happens, we must remember that Bible study is meant to be done in community.

After each section, you will find blank pages for additional notes, particularly for note-taking during the sermons. This would allow all of your notes throughout this Christmas series, both in personal study and in sermon content, to be together in the same place. If this would be useful, it is there for your benefit.

We pray this study guide, going along with our weekly sermon series, helps you to grow deeper in understanding and applying the words we will read in Scripture, and that the words you read and the truths you learn will fuel a delight in Jesus Christ, giving you strength to live where the Lord has called you today.

Week 1: December 1, 2024
Rejoicing in the faithfulness of God

READ: Luke 1:26-56

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- What does it mean to find favor with God?
- Notice the ways Jesus is described in this passage. What does this teach us about Christ?
- Zechariah was condemned for his doubt (Luke 1:18-20), while Mary was not (1:34). How do we maintain trust in God even when we do not understand?
- What does Mary's response teach you about how you ought to respond to God today?
- Which aspect of Mary's song (1:46-55) resonates with you the most right now? Give praise to God for that today.

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 2: December 8, 2024
Rejoicing in the salvation of God

READ: Matthew 1:18-25

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- Why does it matter for our faith that Jesus was conceived of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit?
- Consider some of the reasons Joseph might have feared taking Mary as his wife. How would this angelic message strengthen him?
- Why does it matter that this Christmas story happened to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies?
- This passage gives two names for Mary and Joseph's child: Jesus, and Immanuel. How do these two names help us better understand his work for us?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 3: December 15, 2024
Rejoicing in the glory of God

READ: Luke 2:8-20

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- Scripture is “living and active” (Hebrews 4:12), meaning we continue to learn more the more we study. What about this familiar story stood out to you in a fresh way this time?
- Why is it significant that the news of Jesus’s birth was first announced to shepherds?
- In what ways is the birth of Jesus “good news of great joy”?
- What should we learn from the response of the shepherds?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 4: December 22, 2024
Rejoicing in the reign of God

READ: Matthew 2:1-12

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- Why were the wise men seeking Christ? Contrast that with why Herod was seeking Christ. What should we learn from that?

- Why is it significant that the Christ would come from Bethlehem?

- What should we learn from the wise men's response to seeing the star and the Christ? How should it inform the way we respond to Him?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Christmas Eve: December 24, 2024
Rejoicing in the presence of God

READ: John 1:14-18

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- Why is it such glorious news that God became flesh and lived among us? How does that shape the way we relate to Him even now?
- What does it mean to be full of grace and truth? How do we live with both?
- What does it mean that Jesus has made God known?
- What does John say we receive from Christ? How will that impact your life today?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 5: December 29, 2024
Rejoicing in the return of God

READ: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- When we think of Advent, we are meant to think both backward (toward Christ's first coming) and forward (toward His second coming). Which do you spend more time thinking about, and why? What might be lost by not focusing on both comings?
- How does knowing Jesus is coming again give us hope?
- How do these words encourage you today?
- How can you encourage someone with these words today?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 6: January 5, 2025
Rejoicing in our relationship with God

READ: Revelation 21:1-7

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- Think about how important the idea of “God with us” is to the Christmas story, and then notice it shows up here too. Why is this concept so important to the Christian life?

- There are many promises in these verses. Which one stood out to you the most as you read it? Why?

- How do these verses encourage you today? How does this hope change the way you think and live right now?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

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