

THE GREATEST LOVE GAVE THE GREATEST GIFT

Life Connecting Teams ~ December 2023

New Covenant Church of Philadelphia

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son. **John 3:16 NKJV***

*"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world". **John 17:18 NKJV***

OBJECTIVE: To bring back to our focus and remembrance, the mission of Jesus Christ in the earth.

INTRODUCTION:

Christmas truly is one of the most wonderful times of the year. For many, there are warm parties, fond traditions to celebrate, and gifts to be shared. It's a joyous time of celebration. However, sometimes we get lost in the season and forget the reason we celebrate it to begin with. **Among the hustle and bustle, our focus is lost, and priorities are misaligned.**

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. Christians believe that Jesus came down from heaven to give us the greatest gift of all: eternal life. Eternal life means living forever in God's presence, free from sin, death, and suffering. God in our midst. God with us. Emmanuel, the greatest gift. The only reason for the season. And the source of all our joy.

But why do we need this gift? The Bible tells us that we are all sinners, meaning we have disobeyed God and fallen short of His perfect standard. That's why God sent His only Son, Jesus, to rescue us from our hopeless condition. Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again from the dead, defeating death and the devil. He did this out of His great love for us, so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life (**John 3:16**).

This is the good news of Christmas and demonstrates the greatest love and the greatest gift of all: God loves us so much that He gave us His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins and give us eternal life. All we must do is accept this gift by faith, repenting of our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. When we do this, we become God's children and receive His Spirit, who helps us grow in our relationship with Him. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (**John 1:14 NKJV**)

LESSON: - As you go through this lesson, take time to discuss the heart of the message. Share testimonies, insights, lessons learned and relevant applications.

In Jesus' life, He shows that He was a man on a mission. He had a purpose, which He intentionally fulfilled. Even at a young age, Jesus knew that He "must be about His Father's business" (**Luke 2:49, NKJV**). In the last days of His earthly life, Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem," where He knew He would be killed (**Luke 9:51 NKJV**). **The fundamental mission of Christ's time on earth was to fulfill God's plan of saving the lost.** **John 1:14 NKJV**, says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth".

The coming of Jesus was one aspect of the greatest gift to mankind. In **John 20:21**, we see another aspect of God's redemptive plan where believers are commissioned to be partakers in the mission of Jesus Christ, to seek and to save the lost. **Jesus says to the disciples, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."** (**John 20:21 NKJV**). This statement is what Jesus

said to His disciples after His resurrection. He is commissioning them to continue His work on earth. The statement emphasizes that Jesus was sent by the Father and that he is now sending his disciples in the same way.

The disciples are to carry on the work that Jesus began, spreading the good news and gift of salvation to the world. This statement is a reminder that the disciples are not working on their own, but are sent by Jesus, who is working through them. **Jesus is THE GIFT that keeps on giving, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the sent ones in the earth today! Merry Christmas!**

Those whom Jesus calls, he also sends — a sending so significant that receiving His “sent ones” amounts to receiving Him. *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me” (John 13:20 NKJV).*

Because he was in the very form of God, Jesus *“did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6–8 NKJV).*

Please read the inspiring words of this familiar song.

So, send I you to labor unrewarded, to serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown. To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing. So, send I you to toil for Me alone. So, send I you to bind the bruised and broken. Over wandering souls to work, to weep, to wake. To bear the burdens of a world so weary. So, send I you to suffer for My sake. As the Father sent Me, so send I you.

Conclusion

The busyness of the season can cause time to fly and before we know it, the holiday has passed, and we have forgotten to celebrate why we are celebrating it in the first place. But don't get sidetracked—get perspective. **Choose reverence and give honor where honor is due, Jesus.**

Take time to reflect on the significance of this blessed season and what it means for you as a Christian. Share the love of Christ with others, spend time with loved one, Christmas is a time to spend with family and friends. Take time to connect with loved ones and cherish the time that you have together. Practice forgiveness, Christmas is a time to forgive others, just as Christ forgave us, spread joy and hope: **Christmas is a time to spread joy and hope to those around us.**

Remember in Prayer

- Our founding Pastors Bishop Grannum and his family; Pastor Bob Oliver and Lady Denise Oliver and their family.
- Pastoral staff: Pastor Wangui Mwangi; Pastor Omar Barlow and his wife Jeneen; Pastor Andrew Grannum and his wife Chevas and their families.
- NCC staff and volunteers
- All heads and leaders of ministries at NCC
- The Prayer Station Ministry and all who participate in going out to share the gospel to pray for others or any other role to support the ministry.
- The sick and shut-in; those who have experienced the passing of a loved one.