



Our Dear CHRIST Enters In

Devotions for Advent

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Lift up your heads,
O gates! And be lifted up,
O ancient doors, that the
King of glory may come in.

Psalms 24:7

Introduction

No matter where life takes us, many of us see home as the place where we are always wanted, a place of warmth, mutuality and welcome. It's more than a structure, it's people, relationships, memories. It's a intangible connection to a tangible place. As we prepare our hearts and homes during Advent, we'll explore how our dear Christ enters in and is the connection between our home here and our forever home to come.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Home Is Where the Heart Is

...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

EPHESIANS 3:17

Imagine you are asked to finish this sentence: Home is where (you fill in the blank). You might automatically answer, “the heart is.” Home may mean different things to different people. It might mean a place, perhaps where you grew up or where you currently live—that physical space filled with love, growth and safety. Or it might mean a relationship that makes you feel seen, heard and understood.

Whatever your definition, Advent is a time for preparing our home(s) for the coming of Christ. He has already come as God made man, born to take our sins to the cross, and he is coming again to usher in a new heaven and a new earth. No matter what form our Advent preparations take, it’s essential to keep Christ at the center.

That will lead us to finish the sentence this way: “Home is where Christ is.”

Dear Lord, make our homes a sanctuary of faith, hope and love. Draw us ever closer to you as the celebration of your birth on earth draws near. Amen.

Expanding the thought: Read Hebrews 3:1-6. What connections do you see?

MONDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Person, Place or Thing?

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

PSALM 90:1

When asking someone to define home, you might ask, “Is it a person, place or thing?” The answer could be “yes” because home can be any of these or all three. After all, home is an essence unique to everyone.

Emily Dickinson wrote, “Where thou art—that—is home.” She was conveying that the very presence of one you love creates a sense of home. Psalm 90 is a prayer of Moses who, even as he wandered the desert for 40 years, considered God his refuge, his home.

Is God your refuge? Through him, are you a refuge for others? This season is a hectic continuum of people, places and things. Perhaps it’s time to slow the pace and focus on God, the Father who loves us so much he sent his Son. Then the other people, places and things will all fall into place.

Heavenly Father, we’re pulled in so many directions this time of year. Help us focus on those things that place you at the center of it all. In Jesus I pray. Amen.

Expanding the thought: Read Psalm 46:10. What can you set aside as not necessary this season?

TUESDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

What's in a Home?

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

EPHESIANS 2:4-5

You've heard the question, "What's in a name?" Today I ask, "What's in a home?" Is it just the basics—the rooms, the furniture, the appliances, the food in the fridge? Or is it all that and more? Let's look beyond the basics.

Our desire is to place God at the center of our home. Yet, how do we—and others—know he is present? God the Father has bestowed upon us his mercy, grace and forgiveness through Christ. In response, we show mercy, grace and forgiveness within our home and to those who consider us their home.

Even as we prepare to come face-to-face with God's gift of grace, expectations of the "perfect Christmas" create pressure. When patience snaps and frustrations flare, may grace, mercy and forgiveness be in your home this Christmas.

Lord Jesus Christ, we do not deserve your gifts of grace, mercy and forgiveness. Forgive us when we fail, and fill our homes with your love. Amen.

Expanding the thought: Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. What can you strive to do differently this year?

WEDNESDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Yearning for Home

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

MATTHEW 6:21

“There’s no place like home. There’s no place like home.” Can’t you just picture Dorothy tapping the heels of her ruby slippers together, yearning for home? Why did she want to leave the wonders of Oz? The answer lies in the sense of belonging, something for which we all yearn.

Home is where we can be ourselves and still be loved. Where we can hurt and be forgiven and be hurt and forgive. Where we can cry and pout and laugh and dance. Where we know we are loved unconditionally. Home is where we feel a sense of belonging, foibles and all.

Our homes aren’t perfect, because we aren’t perfect. Christ came to live the perfect life we cannot and to take the punishment we deserve. As believers, we now belong to the family of Christ and yearn for our eternal home in heaven. After all, Christ came to call us home.

Heavenly Father, your promise to overcome sin and death was fulfilled in your Son, Jesus Christ. Because of your great love, we yearn for life in our eternal home. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Expanding the thought: Read John 14:1-4. What do you yearn for most when you think of heaven?



Home means different things to different people. In these devotions, we'll explore what gives home its place of importance, from what we see to what we experience. Walking through the pages will be an exercise in walking through our own homes and realizing the blessing home can be to everyone who finds sanctuary within. Throughout, we will see that what sets a home apart is placing Christ at the center, because true blessing comes to every home where Christ has entered and is centered.

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