

**Daily Reflection on Scripture**  
**Week of December 22**  
**Jesus – The Face of God**



**Sunday December 22**

*Scripture: Galatians 3:28 In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, in a world that is greatly divided along so many lines I need to hear the words of today's scripture, "There can be no division...." Wow! What would it be like to live in a world with no divisions; a world that recognizes our differences but doesn't see people differently? Help me to pay attention to those times when in my mind I all too quickly divide people into either being less than or greater than myself. Help me to see each person I meet as a brother or sister. Help me to see that there is only one human race and we are all equal. Help me to be the very thing I hope for - a world where there are no divisions of us and them, just all of us as one family of God. May it be so.

**Morning Focus:** Today pay attention to any prejudice that might come up in you. You can't stop the thoughts from coming, but you can stop them from growing by seeing everyone you meet as your sister or brother.

**Noon Text:** Have you had any had any segregated thoughts? Breathe in saying, "I am one". Breathe out saying, "With God and all people". Be the harmony you long for.

**Evening Text:** God, the next few days will be busy preparing for Christmas. Help me to be prepared by resting my body, mind and soul. Thank you for this evening to rest.

**Monday December 23**

*Scripture: Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, I confess that sometimes it is challenging for me to feel as if I have the capacity to offer the gift of hospitality. Help me to see that hospitality comes in many forms. Maybe it can be as simple as paying for someone's drink who is behind me in line at a coffee shop, or as easy as providing a takeout meal to someone who is sick. I can get so wound up in my own ideas of what hospitality means that I allow my own expectations to paralyze me. God, I need Your help to show me the many ways I can offer hospitality to everyone I meet, and to remind me that there really are no strangers in this world, only new friends I haven't gotten to know yet. Help me to find the strength to return the gracious and welcoming hospitality You have always shown to me. May it be so.

**Morning Focus:** Be watchful today for every opportunity to show hospitality to others, particularly to those you might consider strangers. Each one bears the image of God.

**Noon Text:** Has someone shown you kindness or hospitality today? How did it feel to receive that gift? How can you pass it on?

**Evening Text:** Take a few quiet moments to think of all people who are strangers in a strange land. Pray that they will be seen as the beloved children of God that they are.

## **Tuesday December 24**

*Scripture: Deuteronomy 10:19 So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, we have been in a season of anticipation that culminates in the celebration of the birth of Jesus. I can't help but wonder about the hopes and anticipations of those who are foreigners in this land, those far from their own homes, struggling for acceptance, perhaps sanctuary. Generations ago my own family were strangers in this land, carving out a new life, new opportunities. So I ask myself how can I extend a loving welcome to those who are on the margins, struggling for simple acceptance, struggling to find their way in a strange, sometimes unwelcoming land. When I look into the face of a stranger, let me see Your face. And let my words and my actions model the words and actions of Jesus, responding with unlimited welcome. May it be so.

**Morning Focus:** Whoever you encounter today, welcome them with the unlimited welcome that Jesus modeled. At various times of your life you were the stranger. Remind yourself of how that felt. Extend a loving welcome.

**Noon Text:** In the midst of the busyness of Christmas Eve, remember to extend a warm, loving welcome to the strangers you encounter throughout your day. Extend God's love.

**Evening Text:** God, for the gift of Jesus I give thanks. There is no greater gift and I am grateful for the many opportunities to share the gift of Your love as seen in Jesus.

## **Wednesday December 25**

*Scripture: Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, I pause for a few moments on this Christmas Day with my heart full of gratitude. The season of waiting with hope throughout Advent has passed, and the loving promise and joyous celebration of Jesus' birth is here! How in awe I am that You, all powerful God of love, grace, and redemption, would choose to be born on this Earth so humbly as a baby in a manger. How thankful I am for that baby, Jesus, who would grow up as a teacher of compassion, forgiveness, service, and wisdom for all people. May I carry this spirit and example in my own heart and actions on this Christmas Day and every day to come. May it be so.

**Morning Focus:** Merry Christmas! May you embody the loving spirit of the living God as you serve, welcome and celebrate with all you encounter during this joyous day.

**Noon Text:** Take a pause amidst the morning's energy and bring a smile to your face. Look around and count as many blessings as you can to remember the meaning of this day.

**Evening Text:** God, I release the burdens and unmet expectations of the day to You. I raise the memories, community, and gifts of the day to You. I rest content in your peace.

## **Thursday December 26**

*Scripture: Leviticus 19:33 When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, this reminds me of how I have always learned to treat strangers in my land with kindness. To extend a welcome and help whenever possible. But more than that I should not take advantage of their unfamiliarity with my land or culture. I should be a guide, a teacher and an example of goodness in my land. Please help me to always show the love and compassion You have so freely given, to the strangers who sojourns in my land. Actually, as I think about this even more

deeply, I come to see that in reality there is no “my” land or “their” land, we are all fellow sojourners on the same planet. Above all else, help me to remember that. May it be so.

**Morning Focus:** I will have compassion and empathy for strangers and help them as I would like to be helped if I were in a strange place or even felt I did not belong.

**Noon Text:** Have I tried to be kind and helpful with all I have encountered? If not, ask God to help you and then take a step to help at least one person today.

**Evening Text:** I come to rest knowing that I am a part of the incredible human family. I am blessed beyond measure by God’s love. Today, I was blessed to give and receive.

### **Friday December 27**

*Scripture: Matthew 25:40 Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, this scripture is such a wonderful reminder that no matter who I encounter, my response is to offer a loving, compassionate welcome. When I look into the face of a stranger, let me always see Your face. When I get busy, and this has been a busy season, it is all too easy to brush aside the needs of others, too often not even offering something as simple as a smile or a kind word. Instead help me to always offer whatever I can, whatever is needed, extending Your love and Your grace. May it be so.

**Morning Focus:** Today set your course to offer the unlimited love of God to everyone you encounter, seeing the face of God in each face you gaze upon today.

**Noon Text:** Have you been able to look beyond the differences of those you have encountered today, instead, seeing them as a beloved child of God, just as you are?

**Evening Text:** God, the day draws to a close. I am grateful that I can rest in Your love, releasing the events of the day to renew body and soul to prepare for tomorrow.

### **Saturday December 28**

*Scripture: Romans 15:7 Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.*

**Morning Prayer:** This verse is pretty straightforward and quite timely, God, as I have spent the holidays with extended family and friends. While I was very much looking forward to this time together, my family with its diverse personalities and opinions has at times been a challenge this week. I’ve been reminded of holidays’ past gone wrong on one level or another and I become resentful and combative. Help me, God, to be in the moment and let go of those moments of angst as best I can. I may need to set boundaries for myself, but in doing so I can still be welcoming. Help me God, to enter each moment with a welcoming smile and posture, just as Christ has done so with me time and time again. May it always be so.

**Morning Focus:** As you awaken, may the first welcome you offer be to this day and ask God to help you offer that same welcome to all you encounter throughout the day.

**Noon Text:** Take a moment to re-center. Breathe in “as God has welcomed me,” pause, breathe out “I shall welcome others.”

**Evening Text:** Welcome this time for rest. Breathe in deeply, hold, and release the challenges of the day turning them over to God.