



HERE WITH US...TO GIVE US CONTENTMENT!

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Day 1—Salvation History Unfolds before Our Eyes

In Scripture and in the world today, salvation history unfolds before our eyes. Consider Joshua's declaration: "Not one of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass" (*Joshua 21:45 NRSV*). We have seen far greater fulfillment than Joshua did, but we also await the fullness yet to come. Consider again the accounts of Jesus' birth (*Matthew 1:1-2:12; Luke 1:26-55; 2:1-20; John 1:1-18*) and notice how the promises have all been fulfilled. Allow the wonder of Jesus' birth to touch your heart.

Day 2—Contentment through Promise

In what do you find contentment? Is your contentment dependent on circumstances or in knowing that God loves you infinitely? What does Galatians 4:4-7 tell us about being God's children and heirs? As heirs, have we received the fullness of our inheritance (*read Romans 8:14-39 and Ephesians 1:14*)? What difference does it make in your life today to know that you have a glorious future as God's child and heir (*1 Corinthians 2:9; Philippians 3:20-21*)? Pray you will live in the joy of God's promises and seek to share the contentment you have in Jesus with others.

Day 3—The Child of Promise

As you read Luke 2:21-40, notice the promise of salvation being proclaimed, even as the infant Jesus is celebrated. Do you see glimpses of the cross in Matthew 1:21-22; 2:6; Luke 1:31-33; 2:10-12; and John 1:9-14? But even the cross, resurrection, and ascension are not the end of the story. Read Revelation 22:1-6a. Do these words encourage you as you prepare to enter a new year? Do you, like Simeon and Anna, find joy in seeing God's promises unfold? Consider praying Psalm 118:24.

Day 4—A New Year

Simeon and Anna rejoiced in the dawn of a new era in salvation history. Mary and Joseph must have wondered about the future and also simply been awed and humbled as they cradled the infant Jesus in their arms. Do you have the spiritual eyes to see God's activity in history and in your life? Do you cower and tremble at troubles, personal and global, or do you fix your eyes on Jesus and walk in faith? Consider praying one of Paul's prayers each day in 2015 (*eg: Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-14*).

Day 5—Step-by-Step

Consider all that had transpired in Mary and Joseph's lives following the angelic announcements (*Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-33*): travel to Bethlehem, visits by shepherds and magi; and now Simeon's and Anna's bold affirmations about Jesus. Though they must have had fearful moments and times when they felt overwhelmed, Mary and Joseph walked, step-by-

step, in faith and obedience. In Luke 2:21-24, 39, we see Mary and Joseph doing what the law required. What is our call to obedience (*Micah 6:8; Mark 12:29-31*)? Pray.

Day 6—“Moved by the Spirit”

Consider Simeon’s sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit speaking in his heart and his trust in the truth of God’s promises revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures as you read Luke 2:25-35. Though Simeon couldn’t possibly understand all that this salvation (*Luke 2:30*) entailed, he trusted and praised God. Are you sensitive to the Spirit’s voice; do you find great joy in God’s promises? Use 2 Peter 1:16-21 to form your prayer and praise.

Day 7—A Baby, a Promise...Contentment, Peace, and Joy

Mary and Joseph held a real infant; the shepherds and wise men worshiped a baby; Simeon and Anna saw the child and believed God’s promises. Ponder again our theme texts and pray you will find peace, joy, and contentment in God’s promises (*read Psalm 119:81 and 1 Peter 1:3-5*).