

## ,Isaiah 58

Four promises to remember **this Christmas**

### 1. (Christmas card/Christmas letter)

Isaiah 7:13 Therefore the Lord himself will give you<sup>[c]</sup> a sign: The virgin<sup>[d]</sup> will conceive and give birth to a son, and<sup>[e]</sup> will call him Immanuel. NIV

Luke 2: 11,12 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! <sup>12</sup> And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.” NLT

Hebrews 13:5 ...“Never will I leave you; never will I **forsake** you.”

### 2. (Debit card)

Isaiah 53:4-6 he was wounded for the wrong we did; he was crushed for the evil we did. The punishment, which made us well, was given to him, and we are healed because of his wounds. NLV

Luke 2:11 The One Who saves from the punishment of sin has been born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord. NLV

**Ephesians 4:32**..forgive one another, just as God through Christ has **forgiven** you.

### 3. (Seeing or hearing Merry Christmas)

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!  
NLT

Luke 2:10 “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.<sup>11</sup> The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! NLT

2 Corinthians 5:20 So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his **appeal** through us. NLT

One day Jesus was telling people how they would be judged. What would determine their eternal reward.

Matthew 25: 42-46 For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink.<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

<sup>44</sup> “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

<sup>45</sup> “And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’

<sup>46</sup> “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

#### **4. (prop manger scene, show different ones some funny ones. )**

Isaiah 9:6-7 For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given, and the government will be on his  
shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the  
greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness  
**from that time on and forever.** The zeal of the LORD  
Almighty will accomplish this. NIV

- **Second I want you to remember he is coming again.**

Acts 1:10<sup>11</sup> "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you  
standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken  
from you into heaven, but someday he will return from  
heaven in the same way you saw him go!" NLT

Isaiah 58: ..rebuilder of walls and a restorer of homes. We  
are going to let the world know that God is good.

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which was written about 700 years before the time of Jesus the prophet Isaiah speaks of a son who would be called mighty God and Eternal Father. Isaiah also indicated that this son would reign on the throne of King David is the great, God obeying king who reigned from about 1010bc to about 970 bc. God had promised king David that the reign from David's throne would be everlasting. Christians acknowledge that this promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is a descendant of King David and whose reign is everlasting. Today, the teachings of Jesus govern the lives of as many as an estimated 2 billion Christians worldwide. The New Testament also says that Jesus will return in the future and that his kingdom will have no end.

-This promise is for our ultimate healing.

Isaiah 40:31..but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on the wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Ahaz was king at the time and he was not a good guy.

Jerusalem was under threat of the ever expanding Assyrian empire.

Isaiah was given the message of God to warn King Ahaz not to make alliances with the Assriayns, but trust God with their futures and God would take care of things. Of course King Ahaz could only look at the mighty power of the assiryan army and went ahead and made alliances based on what he saw not what God told him to have faith in.

Bless my mommy and daddy...and dear God, take good care of Yourself.

If anything happens to You, we're sunk."

I don't know how many of you have been through an employee performance evaluation. It's often not a real peak experience in life. These are actually supposed to be, as far as I know, things that are in somebody's HR file someplace. Here's the first one from an employer about an employee: "Since my last report, this employee has reached rock bottom and started to dig." Not a happy thing to see in your file. 6 Or this one. This is kind of sobering: "I would not allow this employee to breathe. This employee is not so much of a 'has been,' but more of a definite 'won't be.'" Or this one: "This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot." Now, I mention these, not so that you will use them for the folks that report to you. A lot of people when they think about God, they really do think about God primarily as a kind of divine performance evaluator, and they know they don't ever measure up. If you think about God in this way, you'll find yourself avoiding him in your mind, and you won't talk to him much. You won't set him always before you. It's real important that you understand that whatever you do in life, God longs to partner with you. God

wants to say to you, “Don’t be afraid, because I’m with you.”

This helps us face life.

Illustration: since my father past away I will many times sense his presence his encouragement, his love and the question I have for me and you why are we more readily able to believe that are loved ones, flawed, finite and imperfect are with us and we struggle with an all powerful God who made the promise to be with us and he is not.

Now some estimates say that today in 2010 in North America, we experience about 5,000 ads every single day. These are not just on billboards or television or the web. These are now at gas pumps and bathroom stalls and check-outs in grocery stores. We are surrounded by advertising.

*. How do we as believers increase the sacredness; make the Christmas message bigger?*

*Well, we need to live in the story ... which is difficult. Because as Dallas Willard says, “Familiarity breeds unfamiliarity.” When you get so familiar with something, it becomes like wall paper. You just don’t even notice it anymore. It ceases to really penetrate your heart and your mind. Instead it’s just this well-worn path, this track that we’ve been over, over and over again—it’s the Christmas story.*

You might be asking, what is injustice anyway, because it’s a pretty useless word in America, right? Injustice means everything and nothing all at the same time. For me, as an American, I am pretty much a victim of injustice, like, all day, every day. [laughter] Like the other day, I’m at the grocery store. You have these express lanes in your grocery store, right, for those of you who’ve got important places to be? And I’m always in the express lane. The other day, I’m in the express lane. And there are rules about this. There’s a big sign there that says: 10 Items Only.

So there I am, ready to go into the express lane with my cart. I've got my 10 items. The guy in front of me ... I kid you not: 13 items. [laughter] I mean, I am just getting totally bent out of shape on this. I am getting so angry, I want to sue the guy. And I'm a lawyer and I could do this, you know. [laughter] He's totally breaking the law, and I just want to ... Well, just so you know, when the Bible's talking about injustice, that is not what it's really talking about. Injustice in the Bible is actually a particular kind of sin. Injustice is about the abuse of power. The abuse of power to take from other people the good things that God intended for them: their life, their liberty, their dignity, the fruits of their love and their labor. And when someone who is stronger just rips those things away because they're stronger, God calls it a sin, the sin of injustice.

### **How to Write a Family Christmas Letter Rule #1: *Do something amazing***

Admittedly, this takes some pre-planning. If mostly what you did all year was look busy at work all day, eat dinner, watch TV and take the kids to [Disneyland](#) for a week, face it-you don't have much to write about. The best family Christmas letters contain at least one amazing event or accomplishment, such as vacationing in the South Pole or winning the Pillsbury Bake-Off.

### **How to Write a Family Christmas Letter Rule #2: *Have one of your kids do something amazing***

Can you imagine how much good stuff Balloon Boy's parents will have to write about in their family Christmas letter this year? All their kid had to do was pretend to be stuck in a runaway balloon for all the TV stations to video the family's every move. Although your child does not have to co-operate in a media hoax, it would help if he appeared on *America's Got Talent*, won the National Spelling Bee or at least shook hands with President Obama.

### **How to Write a Family Christmas Letter Rule #3: *Summarize an entire year in one page***

One year a friend (who may no longer be a friend if she read this) sent my family a Christmas letter that included a run down of what happened each month of the previous year. I'm not kidding, for April she actually mentioned doing her taxes. By the time I finished reading the letter, I was exhausted. I almost felt like I had experienced her whole year in the ten minutes it took me to read it. Ironically, this type of family Christmas letter could become obsolete in the age of Facebook and Twitter. Why wait until December to tell your friends and relatives you drank a gingerbread latte in November when you already tweeted it in real time?

Dear friends and family,

It's the Holiday season. A time of giving and love. As such, I am going to take this opportunity to give you an entirely boring, mundane, over the top rendition of what I've been up to this last year. Obviously, I've been way too busy to pick up the [phone](#). What can I say? You'll have to settle with this little biography all about me.

This year, I did absolutely nothing remarkable. I am still not married. Hell, I'm not even in a relationship at the moment. I spent entirely too much time on the Internet and put off getting plenty of stuff done. I did manage to acquire a thirty gallon fish tank. It's a marvelous addition to my apartment, and I think it is entirely worth noting. Browndog and I couldn't be happier!

I have been at my job for the last six months or so. 9-6, 5 days a week. The only thing that offsets the monotony is my Friday Dance [Party](#). Good times. The dogs are healthy and well. They are still terrible on the leash, though. I took them to New Jersey, and they did very well, overall. New Jersey was nice.

Don't forget to [buy](#) me something fabulous for Christmas. (And don't forget my birthday, too!) The dogs and fish send their love.

Hugs and Kisses,

Read more: [Christmas letters with "I did this" and "we did that" sometimes have nonstop bragging. Can you give a take on what a "spoof" or "parody" could be on your Christmas letter? | Answerbag](http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/1034269#ixzz1gXUmlze5)  
[http://www.answerbag.com/q\\_view/1034269#ixzz1gXUmlze5](http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/1034269#ixzz1gXUmlze5)

In other words, it is possible, apparently, from the Bible, for God to be present with somebody and for that person not to know that God is right there with them. They don't know. There used to be a series of books for kids. They may still write them, I don't know, but they all had a character who had kind of a goofy hat and glasses and a striped shirt on. He was on every page, although it was often easy to miss him. Do you remember his name? Waldo.

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And what was the question in all those books? Where's Waldo? Where's Waldo? The point of the books was to master the art of Waldo identification. You could become the master of the art of Waldo identification. He was always there, although his presence was not always obvious at first. Apparently, from the writings of Scripture, becoming aware of the presence of God is an acquired skill. Apparently, it's something that you can learn. You can learn it over time. Apparently, God is closer than you think. In other words, it is possible, apparently, from the Bible, for God to be present with somebody and for that person not to know that God is right there with them. They don't know. There used to be a series of books for kids. They may still write them, I don't know, but they all had a character who had kind of a goofy hat and glasses and a striped shirt on. He was on every page, although it was often easy to miss him. Do you remember his name? Waldo.

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## Take a look at living excellent lives part 2 by John Ortberg.

Joy will replace despair

3 Israel will again be great, and its people will rejoice as people rejoice at harvest time. They will shout with joy like warriors dividing the plunder.

- The enemies power will be broken

4 For God will break the chains that bind his people and the whip that scourges them, just as he did when he destroyed the army of Midian with Gideon's little band.

And then Isaiah says that this will all be fulfilled because of the birth of a baby who will be named Jesus Christ.

If you meet this Jesus you will be forever changed.

- you are different then you were before

- going to a place you weren't before

- filled with something you didn't have before

- the difference is equated in scripture with the difference of being DEAD AND ALIVE!

That's what we believe!

**WE WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO JESUS!**

John 1:14 (NIV)

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This Jesus is the real deal! We saw His glory, the

Isaiah 49:6 speaks about the coming messiah who would be a light to the gentiles.

**Psalms 34:8** Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

The Bible says of one of Adam's descendants, Enoch, "And Enoch walked with God." Then it says of Noah--that's a name that would be familiar to a lot of you--"And Noah walked with God." Every once in a while, somebody would get it. But mostly they didn't. Most of the people hid. But God just kept wanting to be with people.

On and on, all through the Bible, this theme runs until finally God wants to be with his people so badly he comes up with a really outlandish idea. It's as if God says to the angels, "I just can't stand it anymore. I'm going down there myself. I'm just going to go on down."

**Illustration:** Grandpa walked into the family room and found his little grandson, Jeffy, standing up in his playpen, crying. "He looked so pitiful, standing there in his little baseball T-shirt and diaper. His face was red and tear-stained from crying. When Jeffy saw his grandpa, his face lit up in a way that smote the old man's heart. He immediately reached up his chubby little hands in supplication.

"Out Papa, out!"

"What grandpa could resist such a plea? Not this one! He walked over to the playpen and reached down to lift his little buddy out of captivity and distress.

"Just then, however, Law and Order stepped into the room.

“Jeffy’s mother walked out of the kitchen with a dishtowel in her hand and spoke sternly. “No, Jeffy! You are being punished. You have to stay in bed! Leave him right there, Dad.”

“Oh, fine. Now what’s a grandpa to do? His grandson’s tears and reaching little hands tugged mightily at his heart- but he didn’t want to interfere with a mother’s discipline either.

“He couldn’t stand staying in the same room with the boy, reading his newspaper and pretending to be aloof. Nor could he turn around and walk out the door without feeling like a betrayer to his little pal. What could he do?

“Love found a way.

“Since Grandpa couldn’t take Jeffy out of the playpen, he climbed in with him. “If you’re in the playpen, Buddy, I’m in the playpen. What’s your sentence? How long are you in for?” And finding a big, jolly grandpa suddenly filling his little prison cell, the little boy found comfort even in his captivity.” ...

Isaiah written in 700-680 bc

Give history of why this was written. What was happening and what the jewish people were feeling. *They shall call his name Immanuel—God with us, God in our nature, God at peace with us, in covenant with us. This was fulfilled in their calling him Jesus—a Saviour (Matt. 1:21-25), for, if he had not been Immanuel—God with us, he could not have been Jesus—a Saviour. The promised seed shall be Immanuel, God with us; let that word comfort you (Isa. 8:10), that God is with us,*

This message of Immanuel “God with us is important for two reasons.”

- ***You don’t have to face life alone.***

this truth is the fundamental difference between those who follow Jesus and all other religions. All other religions are man trying to reach up to God, do enough to win his audience> Jesus coming to earth as baby was God reaching down to man and saying I will be the one to come to you.

He came not to introduce some vague concept of mercy. He came and he reached down to the lowest parts of the low, no matter who has done what, when, where or how badly. And he came to raise us, not just to here, but watch this. To lift us back to full relational involvement, to life with all of what is intended to being in the family of God in the big house, or the family with celebrations, and food aplenty, and opportunity and joy and freedom and security. And with the promise that when that life is over, we'll go to heaven forever.

Friends, the difference between mercy and grace is the difference between every other religion in the world, and the one you and I by what Jesus Christ did for us are involved in. We have been invited back to the fullness of family and relationship and blessing and joy and honor and privilege and protection and belonging forever.

You know, I was thinking about this the last couple of days. I really don't think the heavens would have parted and the angels would have said to the shepherds, "Here's great news! People in pigpens can sleep in bunkhouses." I really don't think the heavens would have split, and I don't think it would have been called great news--glad tidings of great joy for all people.

I think the reason why the skies opened up, and the reason why the angels sang, and the reason why the star hovered over and all these miraculous things happened then and still happen today is the difference between mercy and grace. And I guarantee you most of your friends don't know the difference here. I guarantee you the people you work with and the people who live next to you, this is the gap right here. This is

Jesus said one time in John 15:15 to a group of followers, "I, now, call you my friends."

I want to challenge you with the emmanuel pricipal.

- When faced with a tough decision about your future remember Immanuel "God with us"
- When afraid to speak truth and confront someone in love your remember Immanuel "God with us"
- When facing insurmountable odds know God stands tall at your side.

All these fears can consume our minds(lay awake a night working the problem) and paralyze our lives.(Soon we can't

make decisions) Our emotions shout the circumstances are overwhelming *I don't think I can handle it.*

## **Joshua was facing a huge responsibility leading the nation of Israel and**

**Joshua 1:5-9** No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup> Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

<sup>7</sup> “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. <sup>9</sup> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

*God commanded Joshua three times to be **strong and very courageous**. The reason why is Israel had failed to enter the land years before because they lacked the courage to trust in God.*

One of the greatest gifts that a human being has, one of your greatest freedoms is you are free to focus your attention wherever you want to. No one else can disrupt that. Some people are very conscious about that, and they work very hard and very well to focus their attention in productive ways or chosen ways.

Other people are real random about it and are either indecisive or non-intentional about it. My part, if I'm interested in my spiritual life focusing my attention on God, is I think about him, talk to him, ask for his help, tell him my plans, pour out my heart, describe my problems, give thanks for joy. I focus my attention on God. If I was going to boil down the practice of spiritual life in one single statement from Scripture, this would be it. I think this is the simplest description of spiritual life in all of the Bible.

*If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. "But our greatest, my greatest need was for forgiveness. So God sent a Savior."*

The desire of God's is so central that it's why he created everything in the first place. It's why he's been doing all that he's been doing through history. It is so central that in the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, it says that when God sets everything right, the fulfillment of human existence will be described with these words. This is what will happen. Think of this as a condition that will one day be utterly fulfilled.

"Now the dwelling of God is with human beings, and he will live with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them and will be their God." That's what the whole thing is about. Now God, I believe, can use an infinite variety of ways to express his presence, because

he made them all. He uses creation, he uses scripture, solitude, divine moments, God can use any of those things to convey his presence and character. God is there my job is to focus my attention on him.

*Let me give you two practices that Let you know God is with you.*

- This is Psalm 16:8. Let's read these words together. "I have set the Lord always before me."
- *Each other.*

*Scripture carry each others burden.*

*Illustration: The Night of Rememberance: We all came from different backgrounds walks of life different ages but we were their for one common purpose to help, to each other through the holiday season dealing with the loss of a loved one.*

**can live in a mindset of fear.** "I'm on my own. Unless I'm real careful and cautious something real bad will happen to me, While there are some really good things we get to experience in life there are also some very scary things.

**I can live my life based on faith.** *When Jesus came to this earth his*

If you had to guess, what do you think is the most common command in Scripture? What is the most frequent instruction God gives to the human race?

Because I will be right by y Some of you are heading into this Christmas season, and it's going to be a dreaded Christmas Eve, because there will be an empty chair at the table. Maybe a loved one died.

You can't imagine how you're going to make it through this Christmas. This is the first Christmas that you'll be single, maybe, because of divorce or death. This will be the first Christmas that you're contending with the eminent loss of someone because of a bad medical report. Some of you, you wonder if this is going to be your last Christmas because of information you have medically.  
our side.

**The problem many of us miss out on a relationship with God because we feel that our debt is too big for God to forgive what in the world would he want with me.**

Illustration: our meeting with Tom Flores Kel bought me a new shirt, we talked about what to wear should we go all out raider or calm raider attire. What are we going to say to him.

We felt totally unworthy to be in his presence, he treated us like well. But because I felt unworthy I wasn't totally me.

You know why this feeling is so damaging to our relationship with God because it keeps you from being the person God designed you to be.

Illustration: the story Christine told me about some people she was working with who were far from God and when she got back in her car she heard God say to her please pray for them because everyone else has given up. The challenge here is for Christ followers to take seriously the great commission. To pray for the neighbor, **(TELL THE STORY THAT CHRISTINE TOLD ME ABOUT THE LADY WHO WAS FAR FROM God and when she got back in the car she felt this message from God would you pray for her because everyone else has given up.)** to do the ask, to serve and love, to give and invest. To be an ambassador for Christ.

- There are some of you right now who keep God at a distance because you just don't feel worthy
- There are some of you right now that won't serve cause you just don't feel worthy.
- There are some of you right now who don't pray because you don't feel worthy

Every time you use a debit card I want you to think of Grace. I want you to cherish the grace of God that forgave the debt of sin that you and I have committed.

And start being the person God called you to be.

