



Island Groups

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Week of December 1, 2024

CHRISTMAS 2024: WHAT'S YOUR FOCUS? – WEEK 1

CHRISTMAS: THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES

(MICAH 5:1-5)

Welcome to our discussion guide for Week 1 of our "What's Your Focus?" Christmas series. As we consider the promises of Christmas, let's open our time together in prayer.

OPENING PRAYER TIME

As we begin this Christmas series, we want to focus our hearts on Jesus through prayer. Take a few moments to quiet your mind and invite the Holy Spirit to speak powerfully through God's Word and our discussion.

You may consider opening with a time of silent reflection, inviting each member to offer their own prayers of gratitude for the gift of Jesus. Then guide the group through prayer by offering the following starter prompts. Be sure to pause and give 30 seconds or so between each one so they have time to reflect and pray:

- Thank God for the gift of His Son Jesus and the promises He fulfills in your life.
- Confess any areas where you have placed your security or peace in something other than Christ.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart to more fully embrace and experience the promises of Christmas.
- Pray for specific situations where you need Jesus to shepherd, protect, or bring peace.
- Lift up those in your life who need to know the hope and promises found in Christ this season.
- Worship Jesus for His eternal nature, creative power, and sustaining presence in your life.



The key is to allow room for the Spirit to lead, while still being intentional about prioritizing prayer. May our time together be marked by humble dependence, genuine worship, and openness to God's transforming presence among us.

Remember, prayer is the work that empowers everything else!

DISCUSSION

Begin the discussion by asking the group to share their general thoughts on promises. Have they ever made a promise they couldn't keep? Have they experienced the joy of a long-awaited promise being fulfilled?

Now turn to **Micah 5:1-5** and have someone read the passage aloud. Pastor Paul explained that this prophecy not only foreshadowed the coming Messiah, but the promises He would bring. **What promises stand out to you from these verses?**

The sermon highlighted three specific promises we see in this passage:

- 1. Jesus Will Be Our Shepherd (v.4)**
- 2. We Shall Dwell Secure (v.4)**
- 3. He Shall Be Our Peace (v.5)**

Which of these promises is most meaningful to you right now and why? How have you experienced Jesus as your Good Shepherd, security, or peace?

Pastor Paul pointed out that promises that provide for us what we can't provide for ourselves are especially significant. In what ways do you feel insufficient or insecure? How does knowing Jesus meets your deepest needs encourage you?

In **verse 2**, we see that the Messiah would come from humble beginnings in Bethlehem, yet His **"coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."** What does this reveal about Jesus' nature and eternal existence? How should this shape our view of Him?

Have someone read **Colossians 1:16-17**. According to these verses, how is Jesus involved in creation and how does He sustain all things? How does this truth relate to the promise that we will "dwell secure" (**Micah 5:4**)?

Pastor Paul stated, **"when we find ourselves insecure, worried, fearful or anxious, it reveals we have yet to fully experience the Christ of Christmas."** Where do you

currently struggle with these emotions and how can Jesus' preeminence and sustaining power speak into that area?

Regarding the third promise, that He Shall Be Our Peace, have someone read **Micah 5:5** along with **Philippians 2:9-11**. How do these verses depict Jesus' ultimate authority and the peace He brings? How should this future reality shape our present perspective and priorities?

Pastor Paul emphasized that we can't have peace without **"God with us"** and the forgiveness of sins Jesus brings. Why is the promise of peace with God through Christ so vital? How have you experienced this peace personally?

Have someone read **Micah 7:18-19**. What do these verses reveal about God's heart and how He deals with our sin? How does this description promote peace in our relationship with God?

The sermon emphasized that Jesus is the answer and fulfillment of all God's promises. How would you explain the significance of Christmas and Jesus' birth to someone who views it as just another holiday?

Pastor Paul shared, ***"because Jesus was faithful and receives all the promises of God, everyone connected to Him by faith receives those promises as well."*** How does this incredible truth impact the way you relate to Jesus and approach life's challenges?

In **verse 4**, we read ***"they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth."*** How does Jesus' expanding reputation and ultimate triumph fuel your security, even in frightening times? Where do you need to trust His greatness over your circumstances?

Reflect on the statement: ***"If you are found in Christ, you will never be undone."*** Do you live with this unshakable confidence? If not, what tends to rattle your sense of security and how can you grow in trusting Christ?

The promise that Jesus will be our peace has both temporal and eternal implications. How have you experienced His peace in a specific situation recently? How does the assurance of peace with God forever change your perspective?

As you consider the three promises discussed — Jesus as Shepherd, Security, and Peace — which one do you most long to experience more fully? What practical choices can you

make to trust and follow your Shepherd, rest in His security, and receive His peace this week?

APPLICATION

Memorize Micah 5:2 or 5:5 this week. Recite it each morning, reflecting on the promises it proclaims.

Identify one area of insufficiency or insecurity in your life. Intentionally release it to Jesus in prayer each day, affirming His promise to shepherd, protect, and bring peace.

Share the significance of Jesus' birth and the promises He fulfills with one person this week. Pray for an opportunity and boldness to proclaim this good news.

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Take time to share prayer requests. Write these down and distribute them so the group can be praying throughout the week. Pray for one another, asking God to:

- Reveal His shepherding care and guidance in specific situations
- Strengthen each person's security and confidence in Christ
- Flood anxious or troubled hearts with supernatural peace
- Open doors to share the reason for the hope within us this season
- Deepen our awe and adoration of Jesus, our promise-keeping Savior

Close by reading Micah 5:2-5 again, declaring these promises over your lives and church family. Thank God that Jesus is the fulfillment of every promise and the only source of true security and peace. May you abide in Him this week!