

What Difference Does **CHRISTMAS** Make?

With the hectic pace of Christmas, we can often overlook what difference Christmas makes other than jamming up our calendars, overspending on gifts and wondering what it is all about. This Advent, as we prepare once again for Christmas, we will explore the very practical impact Christmas has on our relationships, in our world and deep within our hearts.

Week 1 • Love... One Another

Every time we pray The Lord's Prayer, we ask God to forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. St. Paul calls this the Ministry of Reconciliation. That is, the forgiveness we have received becomes the motivation and the ability to do the same for one another. --2 Cor. 5:17-21, Matthew 6:9-15

Week 2 • Hope... for a Broken World

The fall of Adam and Eve not only infected humanity, but the Bible says that all of creation groans until that day of restoration. Christmas propels our vision forward to that day in which God will heal the broken world and return us to that shalom of Eden.

--Revelation 22:1-7; Romans 8:18-25; John 3:16-17

Week 3 • Peace... That Passes All Human Understanding

With Christmas comes a peace, not necessarily in the cessation of all wars or bringing calm to the daily news, but the Bible speaks of an inner peace that goes beyond description and understanding. It is a deep peace within that the chaos of the world cannot overcome.

--Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 1:26-38

Week 4 • Joy... to the World

As we celebrate the gift of music this season, where does that joy come from? At some point, this Christmas message becomes very personal when we come face to face with the gift of God's mercy and forgiveness. It is at that point, our hearts can truly sing, "Joy to the World, the Lord Has Come!" --Philippians 3:7-11; Luke 1:46-56

