

The Lily Pad



“I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.”

Solomon 2:1



Wow! What a month December was! Where did the time go?

Christmas finally gets here, and now it's gone. Plans were laid. Preparations were made. Months were spent dreaming about toys under the tree. Frantic rushing and buying consumed our lives to get it all done before the Christmas.

Well, it came. Now it's gone. The built-up anticipation for Christmas

was overwhelming and then it swiftly passed. Yes, other holidays and special celebrations are noted on the brand-new 2020 calendar but, none are quite as special as Christmas. Nothing can compare to the anticipation and joy we experience on that holy day. Then it's gone.



Christmas passes just as quickly on the pages of Scripture. Prophecy after prophecy foretold of the promised Savior. Angelic messengers told of his arrival. *Suddenly there he was* - baby Jesus lying in a manger. Then the Gospel quickly changed the scenery as Jesus was a baby no more. In the first part of Luke 2 we hear the familiar Christmas account. In the last part of that same chapter he's a boy - already 12 years old. Next, he's traveling with his parents across the country. *Where has the time gone?*

Scripture skips over every account between Jesus' birth and his 12th year of life and then leap forward to his 30th year? We don't know why. What we don't know about Jesus' childhood, we must not need to know. But what we do have is ours to cherish.

The Son of God came to be born a human being. Jesus came to this earth to be a full-grown Savior. Christmas just made it possible.

The Christmas season began at sunset on December 24 and ends on January 5. This joyful season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the incarnation of God, *“So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.”* (John 1:14).

Each day of the New Year, 2020, that you focus on these holy scriptures, you get to spend precious time with Jesus. Minimal days after Christmas, joy is revived every time the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart through the Word. Treasure each opportunity you spend in God's Word. Even as the festive activities of your Christmas fade into the background, let Jesus prolong your Christmas joy as you get to reopen his priceless gift to you again and again.

The greatest treasure we have is the gift of faith God placed in our hearts through the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I invite you to pray with thanksgiving the hymn below by Graham Kendrick, *Shine, Jesus, Shine*. This hymn is an excellent prayer for you, our church, community, country, and world. May all our prayers

become a song in our hearts throughout all of 2020! We have so much to be thankful for - the joy and presence of Christ in our lives!

Pray with confidence and hope, *“Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us, set us free by the truth you now bring us.”*

Praise God it's January. Welcome to 2020! May your cup of unspeakable Joy be overflowing in 2020. This year will be a year of outstanding testimony and witnessing. Every day in 2020 is a blessing for you. Shout for Joy! Martin, the Adult Children, the Girls and I, genuinely appreciate each of you for the great privilege to serve you in the past year. Thank you for your support. By God’s grace, we pledge to do even better in the New Year! May the dawning of this New Year fill your heart with new hopes, open up new horizons, and bring for you promises of bright tomorrows. Have a prosperous and blessed New Year!

Peace and Grace,

*Pastor Clarissa, Bro. Martín,
Marissa, Biancha, Sophia, Nicolás, Cookie, Hachi, and Sadie*

Shine, Jesus, Shine

Refrain

Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father’s glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with love and mercy;
Send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light!

Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us,
set us free by the truth you now bring us.
Shine on me, shine on me:

Refrain

As we gaze on your kingly brightness,
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory,
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story.
Shine on me, shine on me:

Refrain

The Faith We Sing #2173
Text: Graham Kendrick, b. 1950
Music: Graham Kendrick

