

## **ADVENT SERIES #2: THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE**

Luke 2:1-7; Genesis 35:16-19; Ruth 1:1-5; 2 Samuel 23:14-17

### **INTRO: WELCOME TO THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

*Advent reminds us that we are a people who long for and wait for the coming of Jesus Christ.*

*“Waiting is not just the thing we have to do until we get what we hope for. Waiting is part of the process of becoming what we hope for.”*  
—Ben Patterson

### **ARE YOU WAITING FOR JESUS TO COME?**

### **BETHLEHEM: WAITING NEVER GUARANTEES A SMOOTH JOURNEY**

### **AFTER SPENDING SO MUCH TIME WAITING, WHY BETHLEHEM?**

What was Bethlehem remembered for?

Bethlehem was a place of \_\_\_\_\_. (Genesis 35:16-19)

Bethlehem was a place of \_\_\_\_\_. (Ruth 1:1-5)

Bethlehem was a place of \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Samuel 23:14-17)

### **WHERE GOD ENTERS INTO YOUR WORLD, HE IS ABLE TO REDEEM**

Luke 2:1-7

*“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to his own town to register. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.”*

Genesis 35:16-19

*“Then they (Jacob and his household) moved on from Bethel. While they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, “Don’t despair, for you have another son.” As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni (means “son of my trouble). But his father named him Benjamin. (Son of my right hand.) So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).”*

Ruth 1:1-5

*“In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. <sup>2</sup> The man’s name was Elimelek, his wife’s name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. <sup>3</sup> Now Elimelek, Naomi’s husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup> They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, <sup>5</sup> both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.”*

2 Samuel 23:14-17

*“At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. <sup>15</sup> David longed for water and said, “Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!” <sup>16</sup> So the three mighty warriors broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. <sup>17</sup> “Far be it from me, LORD, to do this!” he said. “Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?”*

### **SOME QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DEVOTION:**

1. Invite God into your time as you consider these questions. Think about your life at this time. Besides a Covid19 vaccination, can you think of a few things you are waiting for?

2. Advent reminds us that we are a people who long and wait for the coming of Jesus Christ. What do you think is involved the practice of waiting on the Lord? Do you think it’s possible for Jesus to enter into your own personal world? If so, how?

3. While Mary was pregnant with Jesus, God, through Caesar Augustus’ census decree, was forced to travel to Bethlehem. For them, Bethlehem was far from the comfort of home. When you’re alone in prayer before God, are there any “Bethlehems” that He leads you to? Why does God do this?

4. Think about this: Jesus was born in Bethlehem but died upon a cross on Calvary’s hill. Because Jesus was born as one of us, He’s able to be our representative. And because He died on a cross, He is able to redeem suffering and death for our sake. What areas of suffering can you offer to Jesus now, as you close in prayer, that you’d like Jesus to redeem for your sake and the sake of others?