

KOOKABURRA

DEC 24 - JAN 25

JESUS THE SAVIOUR



Dear Friends,

Well as you might have guessed, I really enjoy the book of 1 John for its rich, practical applications and its recurring theme of loving one another. It emphasises faith in the Son of God, which is especially relevant as we approach Christmas – a time when God came to dwell with us through Jesus. Christmas is not just a one-day event for us to celebrate but the beginning of understanding who Jesus is for us and those we work with globally.

This event marks the start of a new engagement with God, giving us direct access to himself, our heavenly Father. Sometimes, I take for granted the profound meaning of Christmas. It's when God sent Jesus, the Saviour of the world, the one who would go from the stable to the cross to heaven. Last month, we reflected on 1 John 3:11-24 about loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. This month, let's focus on 1 John 5:1-12. I encourage you to take a moment to read it.

It's interesting to think about the passage above in the context of Christmas. The image of a baby in a manger, which we often see on lawns and in churches, is just the beginning of the story, not the end. In verse 1 of the chapter, it says, "*Everyone who believes...*" This means that everyone has the opportunity to believe in Jesus as the Christ and become a child of God. This amazing relationship is open to all, and the means are clearly spelled out in the following verses.

Verse 1 continues, "*And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too.*" This ties back to the theme of loving one another, which we discussed last month. We are called to love God's children, our brothers and sisters in Christ. This love for one another is a recurring theme throughout the passage. Some people might wonder, how do we love God's children? Verses 2 and 3 provide clear commands: "*We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments.*" So, the first instruction is loving God and keeping His commandments, which "*are not burdensome*" (verse 3). When our relationship with God is strong, we can love each other more fully.

Serving on a small missions team overseas can be particularly challenging if our relationship with God is not strong. It becomes difficult to work alongside others if we are not grounded in our faith. The letter acknowledges the battle we face in this world and encourages us to love our brothers and sisters despite these challenges. It's a reminder that our faith and love for God empower us to overcome difficulties and maintain unified relationships with those around us.

Verses 4 and 5 offer encouragement, stating that every child of God defeats this evil world through faith. This faith is in Jesus as the Christ, who came at Christmas as the Saviour of the world. Believing in Jesus as the Son of God is the key to victory. In verse 5, it goes on to say: "*And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*" This simple truth can be a stumbling block for many, but it is an essential belief to our faith. It's a wonderfully simple yet profound truth that we sing about during Christmas: "*God sent His Son, they call Him Jesus.*"

Verses 6-10 discuss three witnesses: the water, the blood and the Spirit. These witnesses are unanimous in their testimony. Jesus was baptised in water, shed His blood and the Spirit confirms the truth. God also testifies about His Son and those who do not believe are essentially calling God a liar. The passage emphasises the importance of believing in Jesus for eternal life. It's a powerful reminder that our faith is supported by these testimonies and rejecting them is equivalent to rejecting God's own word.

The final verses in this passage redefine life: "*He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.*" God has built the case for Jesus as the Son of God, and our faith in Him is intrinsically linked to eternal life. This connection between Jesus, faith and life is central to our understanding of salvation.

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Without Jesus, there is no eternal life, no life forever with God.

As we reflect on these profound truths, let's not limit Christmas to a once-a-year event. It marks the beginning of God's engagement with His people through the Saviour for eternity. God's Son is testified to be true and worth believing in – because without Him, we don't have life.

Whether it is your first Christmas in a new culture or the same place you celebrate every year, may you have a joy-filled Christmas as you remember the greatest gift we have received through Jesus. Friends, my encouragement to all of us is to live and serve in that truth so that many may come to know and grow in Jesus, because their life depends on it – a life with Him for eternity.

Together in Him,



Mal Watts
National Director



CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE

The SIM Australia office will close for Christmas on Tuesday, 24 December 2024 at 5pm. The office will reopen on Thursday, 2 January 2025.

As we remember the greatest gift in Jesus, would you prayerfully consider giving to a mission worker or ministry this Christmas? You can find out more about SIM's mission workers, ministries and projects by visiting sim.org.au/give/.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This year, our Christmas Appeal is seeking to raise funds to support the ministry of Across. It would be greatly appreciated if you would share our Christmas Appeal with your supporters and networks.

There are many ethnic communities in Australia without access to the Gospel in their own language. This Christmas, you can provide these least reached people, both locally and globally, with the true hope found only in Jesus! Please pray that as the Good News is presented by the ministry of Across, many hearts will turn to Him! To find out more and become a ministry partner of Across, go to sim.org.au/truehope.

Prayer point:

This Christmas, pray for more workers to be raised up with a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ! Pray that the ethnic communities living in Australia will find true hope and be transformed by Him. Pray that many will continue to faithfully support the work of Across, and those that partner in ministry will be encouraged by how God is building up His Kingdom.

Provide True Hope this Christmas!

