

Week Beginning: 9th December 2018

Worship Series: #2 in series



living sharing growing



lifegroups
live life abundantly

Theme Verse

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called...Mighty God.

Isaiah 9:6

Remember This Week

When we receive the impossible, we will get a Christmas treat that is better than anything we can consume this Christmas season. For as the Wonderful Counselor — God makes the plans.

As the Mighty God — he makes the plans work, no matter how messy the situation seems. All of God's plans for you are carried out with all of his infinite might in those tiny fists born for you.



**My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has been mindful of the humble state
of his servant.**

**From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name.**

Luke 1:47-49

We praise you, our God, for keeping your promise to the people of old and raising up the Saviour, the Mighty God, to enter into and redeem all people from the mess. Help us this Advent, to receive the Mighty God in our own lives, to embrace the mess his coming brings, and to give birth to his presence in the world that all may be in for the greatest treat in the world – forgiveness, life now and life forever. Reveal yourself to us again as the Mighty God as we grow deeper in your life, in this time together. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



1. *What has added to your feeling that Christmas is coming over the last week? What has been messy in your life this past week?*
2. *How have you gone with your "living purposefully" goal from last time? What came easily? Where was it a struggle?*
3. *What is your favourite Christmas treat to bake/cook or consume?*
4. *What's your pantry like - ordered and neat or messy and chaotic?*
5. *Share a time when God "messed up" your life or 'ruined' your plans.*

It's all the rage in house design - open plan living with easy sight lines to all parts of the house and the gorgeous island bench you've always wanted. There's just one problem. Open plan living has meant that everything is out in the open...everything. Your everyday messes are literally on display for the world to see. The solution - create a 'Butler's Pantry' where the dirty dishes, coffeemaker, food preparation messes can be hidden away behind closed doors, your little secret! Many people wish that God would be like that - the butler who is there to clean up the mess of our lives. The butler who is there to fix things up, serve us and make us look good. But God's ways are not our ways. God's call to birth his presence into this world inherently messes up the order of life that we establish - the mess is on show, the mistakes are obvious. But that's the power of the Mighty God; who comes into the womb of the mess of this world, to live in a mess he didn't create to redeem those whose life was a royal mess. And when we receive that word of promise in our lives, and that presence comes to us...all things are possible...all things are made new...but it gets a little messy when the Mighty God takes hold of us.



Read Isaiah 9:2-7

6. How does this passage illustrate the idea that Jesus is Mighty God?
7. How does the title "Mighty God" contrast with last week's focus "Wonderful Counselor"?
8. What expectations of the Messiah would a passage like this prompt? What kind of Messiah would the people of Isaiah's time expecting?
9. What does it mean for you that Jesus is Mighty God?

The word translated "mighty" is the word gibor, which means "strong one" or "the powerful, valiant warrior." So the term "mighty God" is a military title. The Messiah or promised one is a God who fights for his people! In Isaiah's day things looked bleak. Judah was in collapse morally, politically and nationally. Yet, God revealed to Isaiah that he, God, was still on the throne. God was at work in history, bringing about his perfect will. He would rescue a remnant and bring them back from captivity. From the brink of defeat, God would snatch victory. This mighty God will fight for his people.

10. How have you experienced God fighting for you?

Read Luke 1:26-55

11. What was the tone of the angel's greeting to Mary? Why might this have been important?
12. If an angel came to you with a message from God, how would you expect the angel to greet you?
13. How would the news of her pregnancy have "messed up" things for Mary?
14. What do you think of Mary's response to God's plan? When have you been able to respond to God in a similar way or what stops you from saying, 'May it be to me as you have said?'
15. In what way did God use Elizabeth's pregnancy in this first Christmas?
16. How does Mary's song give voice to Isaiah's prophecy that Jesus is the 'Mighty God' who fights for his people?
17. Which part of Mary's song do you find especially meaningful? Take a moment to share your findings.

This week we are called to embrace the mess. We have seen that God uses messes for his glory. That is good news for us! When we embrace our messiness and begin to look for God at work in them we find freedom. Despite your mess, you are highly favoured. God comes to you this Christmas to remind you that you do not need to hide your mess. You do not need to be afraid. Instead, begin to let Jesus redeem your mess and rewrite your story to be a testimony of his mighty power. Let him grow in you so that you can give birth to his presence in this world. This transformation doesn't happen overnight. It will happen from the inside-out. Like Mary needed Elizabeth, you also can't do it alone. Your LifeGroup exists to walk alongside you and provide accountability as the life of Jesus.

15. In what area of your life do you need to believe that "nothing is impossible with God?" or what is something seemingly impossible that he is calling you to entrust to him?
16. How can you find the joy of Elizabeth and the obedience of Mary amongst messy circumstances? Reflecting on and naming a specific circumstance might be a useful place to start...
17. Choose a verse from either of this week's passages to commit to memory, in mind and in heart. Write it on your bathroom mirror, make it your phone wallpaper...whatever it takes to let God write His truth on your heart this week. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring this verse to mind when you need to be reminded.

- * Praise God that he is the Mighty God who fights for you. Thank Jesus that nothing is impossible for him. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you adjust your expectations for this Christmas season and to trust him in the mess of life.
- * Pray for those in your group and those in your life who experience grief, sorrow, or difficult circumstances at Christmastime.
- * Ask God to give you the obedience and faith of Mary.
- * Begin to lift up those who will visit the church over Christmas. Ask God to work something mighty and unexpected in the heart of each newcomer. Pray that many would hear the Gospel for the first time.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

Name, the Mighty God can do the impossible in you and through you. Amen.

