

### **An Epiphany Journey with Jesus to Thrive in His Kingdom**

“This is the only way to be sure we’re in God. Anyone who claims to be intimate with God ought to live the same kind of life Jesus lived.” (1 John 2:6 MSG)

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy (1 Peter 1:8)

#### **Dates and Session Subjects**

##### **12<sup>th</sup> January. The wonder of the Incarnation**

Get to know each other and catch-up since Rule of Life Series 1

Read Matthew 2:1-11. (Celebrating the wonder of the Incarnation) and Luke 2:25-40. (Simeon and Anna; Recognising Jesus as the Messiah)

Long ago Augustine of Hippo said “The Son of God became man to enable men to become the sons of God” and more recently Dallas Willard explained, the “Incarnation is Christ coming into flesh to allow us to identify with Him in His life and ministry and on the cross and in life beyond the cross.” Through the Incarnation, we are enfolded in Christ and accordingly “God has made all things new, and reconciled us to himself, and given us the ministry of reconciling others to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18).

##### **19<sup>th</sup> January . The Baptism of Jesus**

Read Luke 3:15-22

We will ask ourselves “why did Jesus need to be baptised and what can we learn?” One part of this study will be to understand what “repentance” means. Biblical repentance is broader and tuned differently - an urgent invitation to reorient our values, habits, loves, thinking, and behaviour. In short, repentance means, “Become a disciple!” Jesus repents not in the sense of turning from sin but in the sense of dedicating himself to follow God’s will fully on earth.

##### **26<sup>th</sup> January . The Marriage at Cana**

Read John 2:1-10

As we learnt from the New Creation series on Johns Gospel, this was the first of John’s seven signs. There are many lessons to draw from this passage, not least the love and empathy that Jesus and Mary exemplify for each other (and those around them), the message of flexibility and obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and the acts of kindness and service – large and small – that we can perform. The closer our relationship with Christ, the greater our ability to respond speedily and compliantly; “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25).

##### **2<sup>nd</sup> February. Jesus in the Wilderness**

Read Luke 4:1-13

How much we can learn from this episode and not just about temptation! Commenting on Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, Walter Brueggeman, and Eugene Peterson wrote: “The wilderness gives Jesus strength. It is not simply a place of negation or temptation. It is also a place of preparation and perception, absent of human power structures and controls, a wild place where supernatural forces move unfettered — a place that can empower, depending upon how the experience is handled. Our wildernesses and deserts are not our endings. It is the Spirit of God who leads us about in them. They are our opportunities.”

##### **9<sup>th</sup> February. Jesus’ Mission Statement**

Read Luke 4:14-21

Luke 4:14-21 contains Jesus’ inaugural address... His thesis... His mission statement. And it foreshadows everything we are about to hear him say and see him do for the rest of Luke’s gospel in

which we see this mission statement being carried out as Jesus continues to love the last and the least: the women, the widows, the children, the sick, the poor, the blind, the lepers, and those who are held captive in a variety of ways. But Jesus doesn't end there. He commands his followers to do the same: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbour as yourself."

**16<sup>th</sup> February. Resting in Jesus' Easy Yoke**

Read Matthew 11:28-30

In the final session, we will bring everything together to rest for a while in the easy yoke of Jesus. How can we step out of our comfort zones and learn to grow as disciples and apprentices of Jesus? As the Message puts these verses, "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."