

DEC 22ND | ADVENT CANDLE OF

Love



PREPARE
for the
Miraculous

With Pastor Mark Sterlace

DECEMBER 22ND 2024



LIVESTREAM
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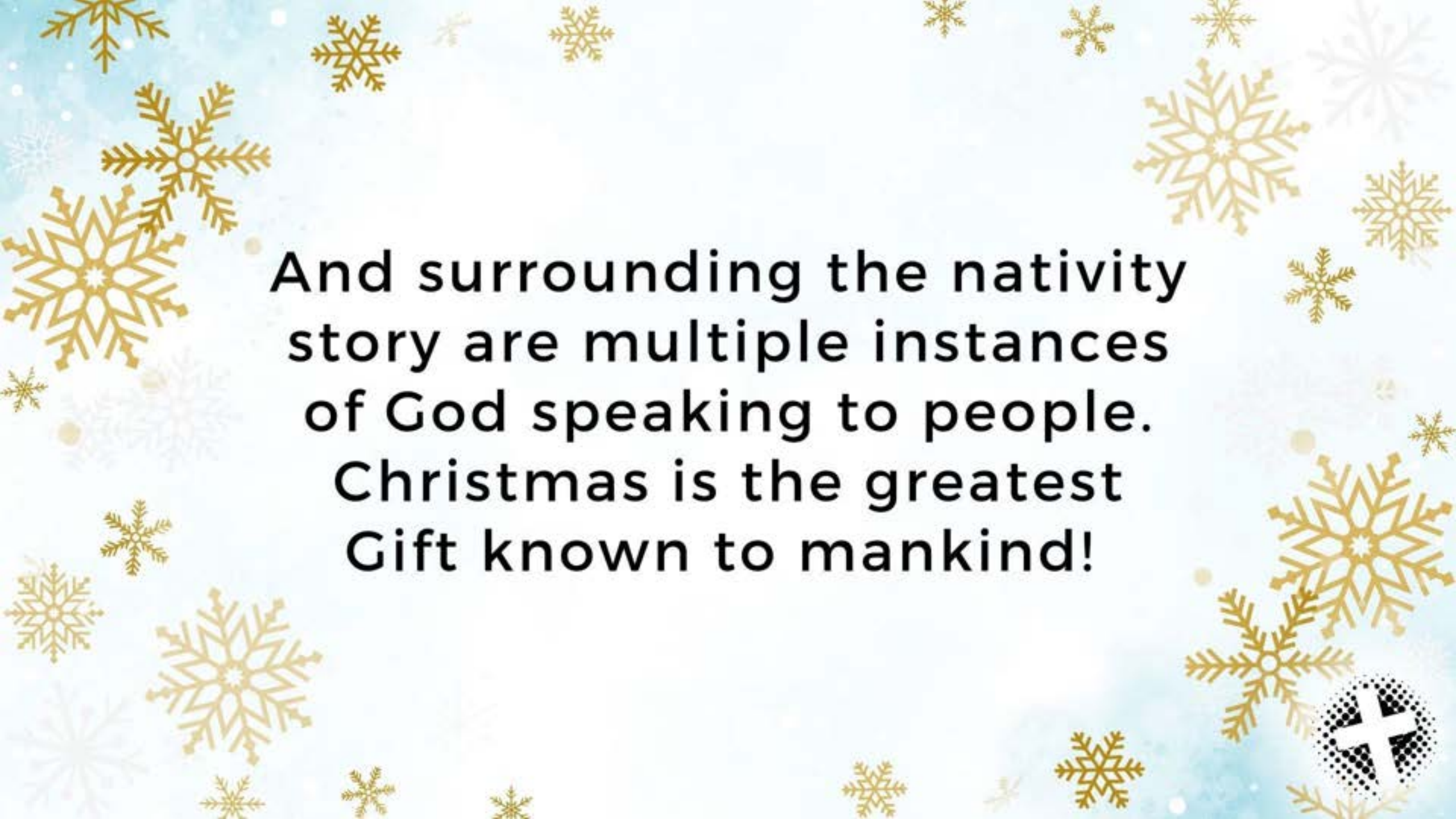


#1] What is Christmas Really?

**Christmas is really a deeply
theological story about the**

Incarnation of Christ—

**God coming to earth—God becoming
man- the Word becoming flesh.**



And surrounding the nativity story are multiple instances of God speaking to people. Christmas is the greatest Gift known to mankind!



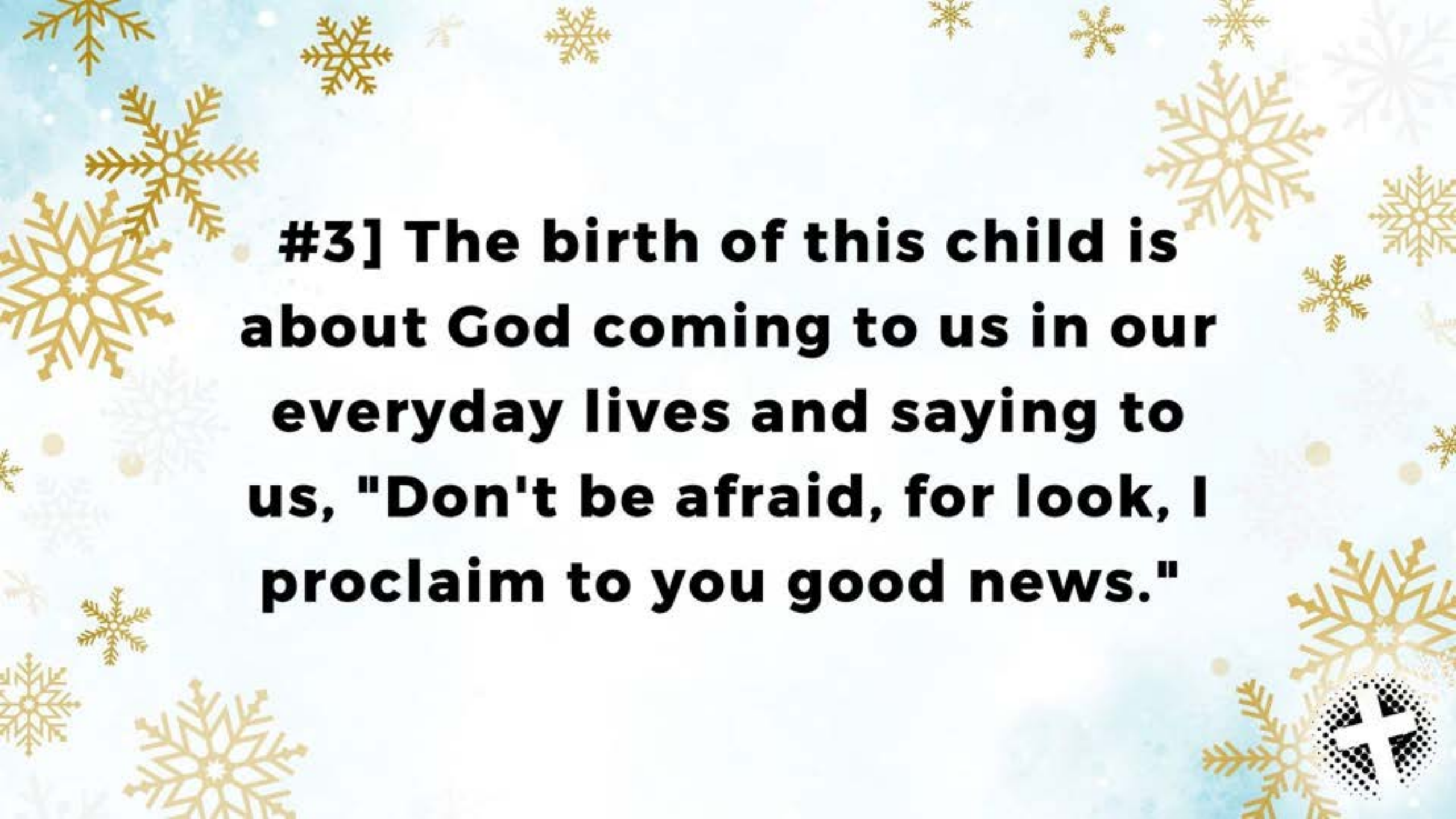


**#2] We look to the Christmas to
be a time of perfect Peace,
Harmony, and Joy.**

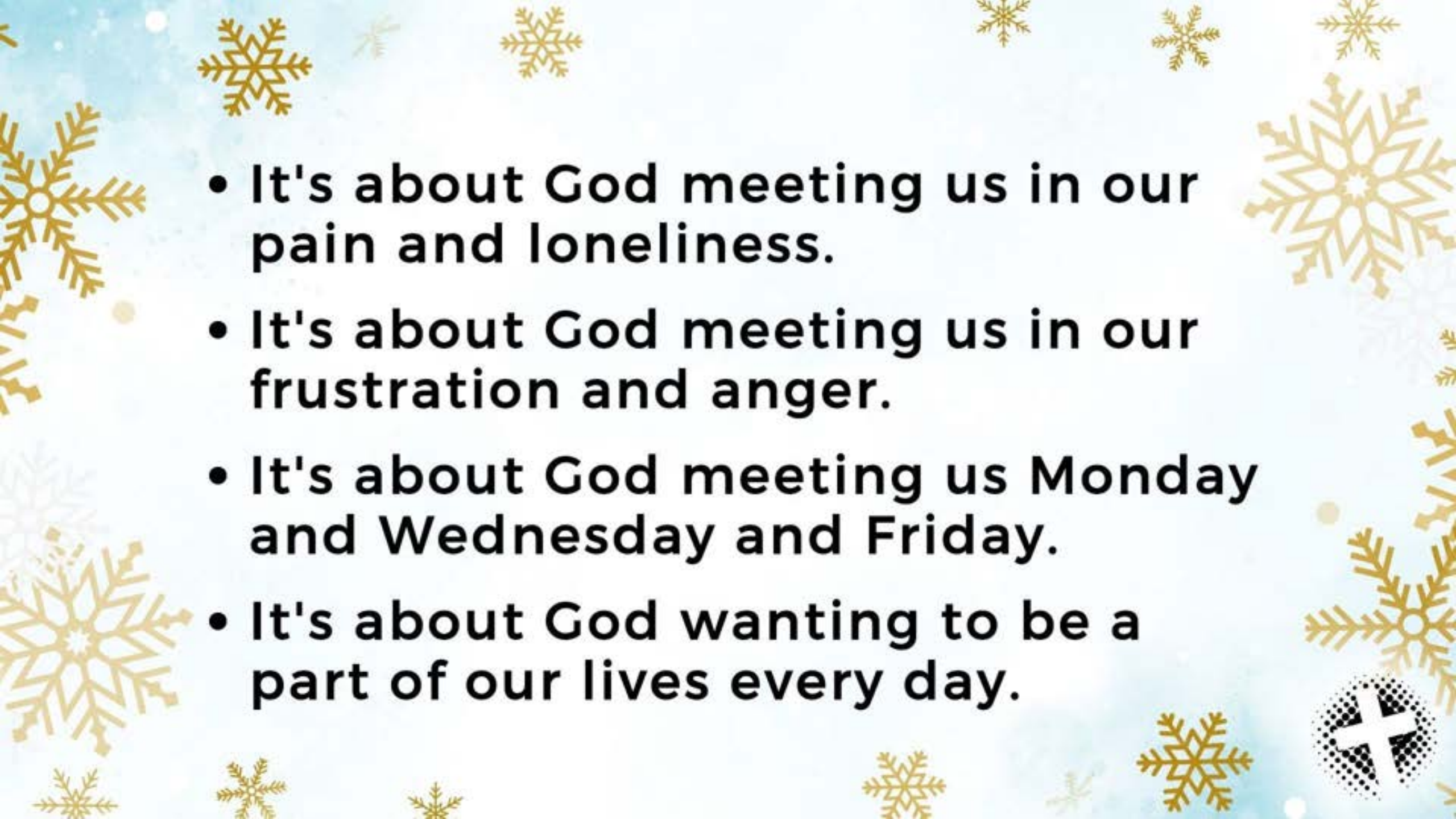
**...But the first Christmas was not
that way. It was an interruption.**



A Supernatural
INTERRUPTION!



#3] The birth of this child is about God coming to us in our everyday lives and saying to us, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news."

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- **It's about God meeting us in our pain and loneliness.**
 - **It's about God meeting us in our frustration and anger.**
 - **It's about God meeting us Monday and Wednesday and Friday.**
 - **It's about God wanting to be a part of our lives every day.**



This Morning:
PREPARE
for the
Miraculous

Read Luke 1:5-25

“In the days of Herod [the Great], king of Judea, there was a certain priest whose name was [a]Zacharias, of [b]the division of Abijah. His wife was [c]a descendant of Aaron [the first high priest of Israel], and her name was Elizabeth. They both were righteous (approved) in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. But they were childless, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both far advanced in years.



Now it happened while Zacharias was serving as priest before God in the appointed order of his priestly division, as was the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter [the sanctuary of] the temple of the Lord and burn incense [on the altar of incense]. 10 And all the congregation was praying outside [in the court of the temple] at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.



When Zacharias saw the angel, he was troubled and overcome with fear. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, because your petition [in prayer] was heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him [e]John. You will have great joy and delight, and many will rejoice over his birth, for he will be great and distinguished in the sight of the Lord; and will never drink wine or liquor, and he will be filled with and empowered to act by the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb.



He will turn many of the sons of Israel back [from sin] to [love and serve] the Lord their God. It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous [which is to seek and submit to the will of God]—in order to make ready a people [perfectly] prepared [spiritually and morally] for the Lord.” 18 And Zacharias said to the angel, “How will I be certain of this?



For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in age.” The angel replied and said to him, “I am Gabriel; I stand and minister in the [very] presence of God, and I have been sent [by Him] to speak to you and to bring you this good news. [f]Listen carefully, you will be continually silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe what I told you; but my words will be fulfilled at their proper time.”



But when he did come out, he was unable to speak to them. They realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. When his time of priestly service was finished, he returned to his home. Now after this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant, and for five months she secluded herself completely, saying, "This is how the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor on me, to take away my [g]disgrace among men."



The angel gave six specific promises to Zacharias in this passage:

1. Your prayers are going to be answered.
2. God has been gracious. (The name “John” means “grace of God”).
3. You and your people will know joy and gladness.
4. Your child is going to be great.
5. Israel will see national revival.
6. Your child is the forerunner to the soon-coming Messiah.





**“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”
-2 Corinthians 5:7**





HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE MIRACULOUS...

1. Live life on call for God. (v. 6)

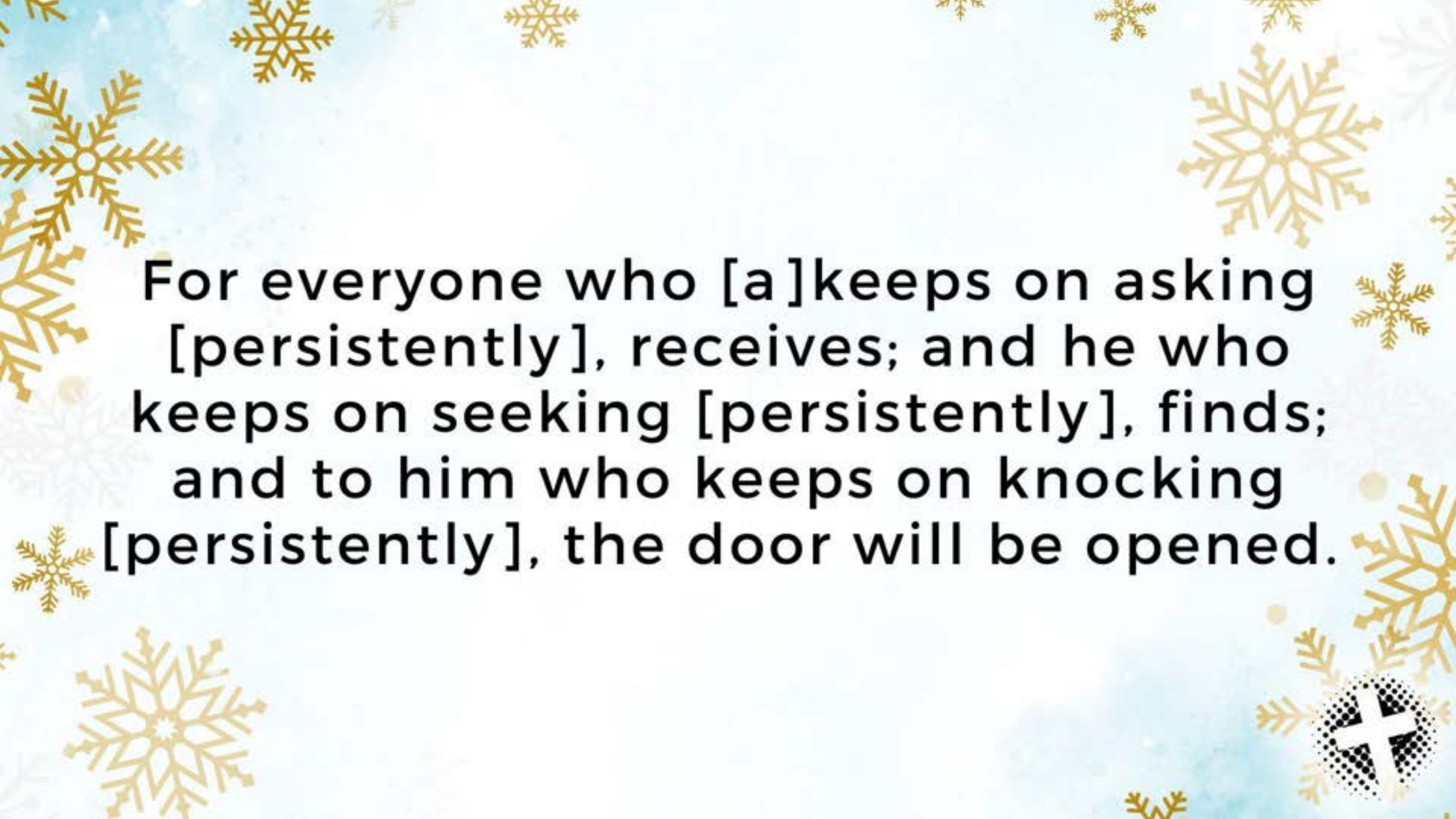
“They both were righteous (approved) in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.”

2. Refuse to let ministry become mundane. (vs. 8-9)

“Now it happened while Zacharias was serving as priest before God in the appointed order of his priestly division, 9 as was the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter [the sanctuary of] the temple of the Lord and [d]burn incense[on the altar of incense].”

3. Keep praying with Persistence. (v. 13)

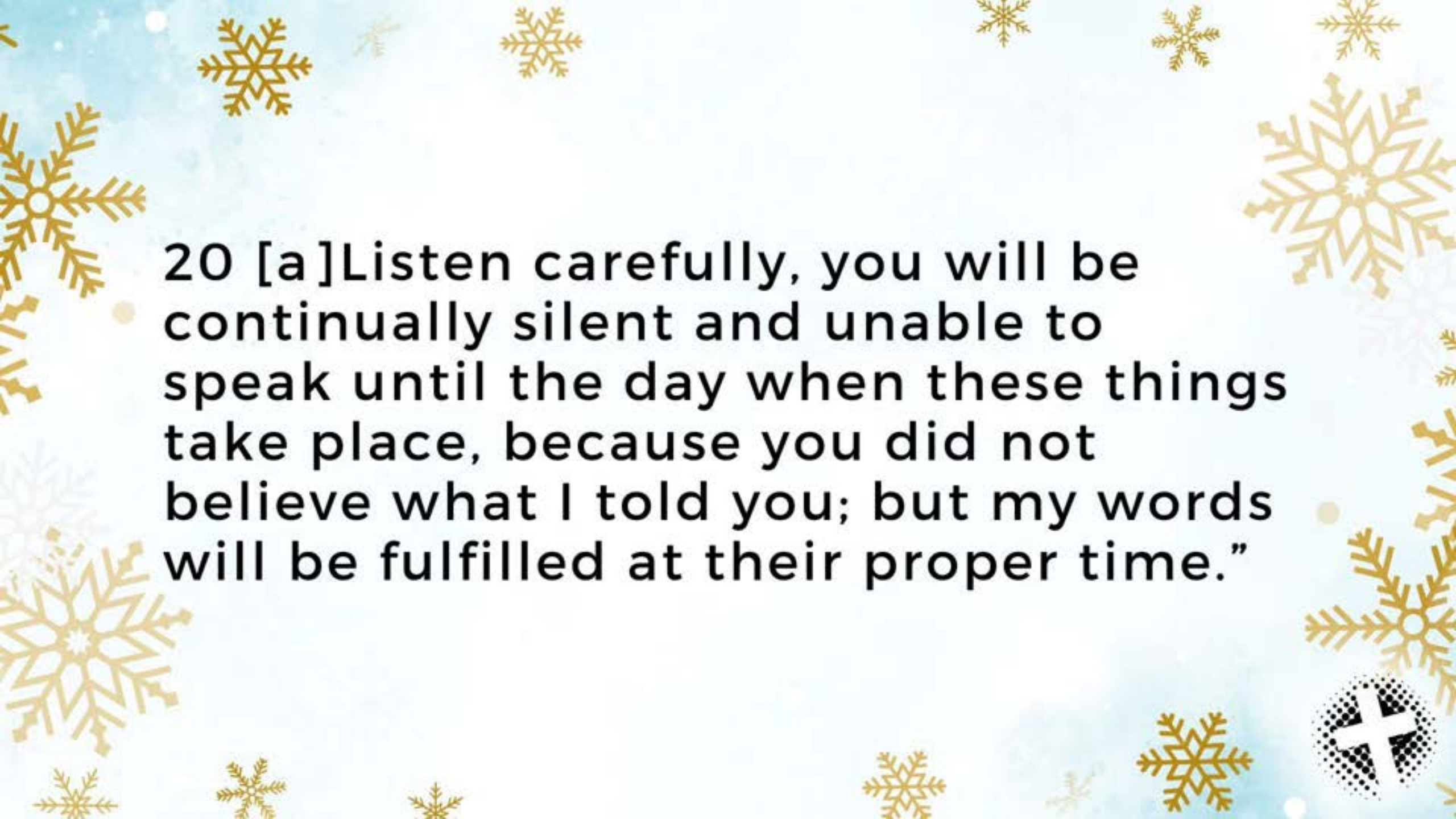
“But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, because your petition [in prayer] was heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.”



For everyone who [a]keeps on asking
[persistently], receives; and he who
keeps on seeking [persistently], finds;
and to him who keeps on knocking
[persistently], the door will be opened.

**4. Believe that God's Word is enough.
(vs. 18-20)**

“And Zacharias said to the angel, “How will I be certain of this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in age.” 19 The angel replied and said to him, “I am Gabriel; I stand and minister in the [very] presence of God, and I have been sent [by Him] to speak to you and to bring you this good news.



20 [a] Listen carefully, you will be continually silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe what I told you; but my words will be fulfilled at their proper time.”



**God coming to earth—God becoming
man - the Word becoming flesh.**

**God speaking to people. Christmas
being the greatest Gift known to
mankind!**





When Zacharias experienced the miracle, he confirmed it by naming his son John

- The people marveled and Zacharias got his voice back.
- He immediately employed it to give praise to God and to share with us some rather important spiritual truths.
- He sang what has since come to be known as The Benedictus. **Luke 1:67-79**

Join us on Christmas Eve ~ for the rest of the story

