

Week Beginning: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Worship Series: #4 in series



living sharing growing



**lifegroups**  
live life abundantly

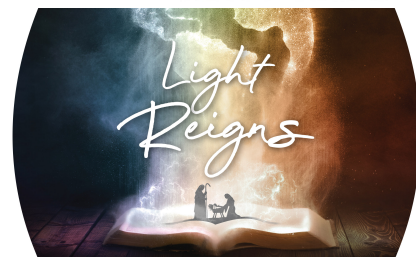
### Theme Verse

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

Isaiah 9:7

### Remember This Week

Beyond Bethlehem, beyond Calvary; the light will reign in every heart that opens the door of darkness and allows Christ to break in and break through bringing new hope, endless beginnings and eternal life.



**I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame. In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.**

**Psalms 44:6-8**

Lord Jesus, we know that in you is all power and authority in heaven and on earth. We pray that you would rule in our hearts as we gather around your Word. Make your light shine in us we pray, Amen

1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *Have you ever been forced to challenge an authority? How did you go about it?*
4. *In our modern democratic system in Australia, we find it easy and often enjoy criticising those in public office. Why do you think this is?*
5. *Discuss some of the different ways you have seen people wield or exercise authority or leadership.*

It's called the Second Coming Type and it's the largest display type used by newspaper editors around the world and saved for headlines of extreme importance; news that is earth-shattering, world changing and life-defining. If Isaiah was a newspaper editor, Isaiah 9 would be written in 'Second Coming Type' for there is no greater news that needs to be told and the world needs to see. It's news that is world changing, life-defining and eternity shaping. To miss this news is to be trapped in darkness and despair. Isaiah goes all out, placing the spotlight on this message so that the whole world can see it, hear it, celebrate it and pass it on. We'll also shine the spotlight on that today as we continue to celebrate the coming of Christ...the light of the world...The Light that Reigns over every darkness and drives out every shadow. Light that reigns now and for all eternity

Read Isaiah 9:1-7

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *Which of the titles used for Jesus in verse 6 resonates most with you? Why?*
8. *What, if anything, would change if we thought of the church more like a kingdom belonging to God rather than simply the place we worship on Sunday morning?*

The image of a kingdom is one that we are somewhat removed from here in Australia. We don't have castles dotting the landscape like so many places in Europe; and, although Queen Elizabeth II is still technically our head of state, she has little direct influence over the day to day business of Australian life. As we mark Australia Day this week, we remember that while some people celebrate the freedom and autonomy that we experience in Australia, for many of the indigenous people of Australia, the arrival of Europeans was not a cause for celebration. This is a bit like the two ways people respond to Jesus. For some, the arrival of Jesus in their lives is a joyous celebration and they can't wait to let him reign in their lives.





For others, the prospect of handing the control to Jesus is just too much to ask.

9. *How do you react when someone tries to tell you what to do?*

10. *What makes it easier for you to take direction from some people over others?*

The thing about a kingdom or a well functioning monarchy, is that there is a level of mutual obligation. The knights and lords, nobles and other members of the king or queen's court were expected to pay homage to the king or queen, swearing fealty and loyalty to serve them with all they had, even their lives. In return, the King/Queen was expected to use the resources of the kingdom to improve life for all the citizens in the kingdom. Serving the crown was not about having your freedom restricted but rather about having it protected. The people could appeal to the king or queen for help and assistance when their freedom and livelihood was threatened. Obviously, this did not always work out as ambition, greed and corruption often worked their way into the process.

11. *Read Isaiah 9:3,7 again. How is the reign of Jesus described? Does it sound like something that limits freedom or that enhances and protects it?*

This is what is so remarkable with the reign of Jesus, the Light of the World. Jesus came not to enslave us and bind us to a set of rules and regulations, restricting our freedom. Rather, he came to set us free from slavery to sin, death and the devil. The problem is so many of us fail to recognise the ways in which we are already captives. We have believed that we already experience freedom, yet the pressures of the world around us to be more, do more, and earn more hold us captive. In Jesus, we are already enough, instead of living to prove ourselves, we live because Jesus has proven himself to be all we need to live free of the things that deceive us and hold us back. This is why this is news which deserves the biggest font we can print.

12. *Can you recall a time or event in your life when you were acutely aware of Jesus being in control? What did it feel like, how did it happen?*

13. *Which parts of life do you find it more difficult to give to Jesus? Your family, finances, health, reputation, status, time? Why is it so hard to trust him with these things?*

At the height of the Roman Empire, it was said that a Roman citizen could walk the length and breadth of the empire confident in their safety because of the threat of the justice that would be metered out by Rome against anyone who harmed a Roman citizen. Jesus offers us that same kind of confidence. There is no threat that he cannot overcome for his people.

14. *What things in your life are causing you fear or anxiety at the moment? How can the promises of Jesus help you to bear up in those difficult situations?*



The apostle Paul says in Romans 8:31, "What, then, shall we say in response to these things. If God is for us, then who can be against us?" and shortly after in verse 37 he says, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. In fact the whole of Romans chapter 8 is really a description of what it looks like to live confident in the victory, authority and reign of Jesus. It is a life completely transformed.

15. *How will you let Jesus transform your life this week? Which part of your life will you hand control over to him?*

16. *What is one change you could make to your life that might help your life to be more like a 'second coming' headline, clearly communicating the Good News of Jesus?*

- \* Praise God for his righteousness and holiness. Thank Jesus for his victory over all our enemies. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you daily let Christ reign in your heart.
- \* Pray that God would enable you to grow in the confidence of Jesus victory, and to give you strength to live each day as a walking billboard advertising the amazing news of his reign over all of creation.
- \* Ask that he might use us, as his servants, to bring the truth of the freedom and release he offers into the lives of others.
- \* Pray for Australia on this Australia Day that all in this country may walk into our future together as one people.



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, may the light of Christ reign in your heart. Amen.

