

Cory and I would like to thank all of you for following along with our Weary World-Reflections for a Blue Christmas by Kathy Escobar Book Study this Advent Season. We are going to briefly summarize the key points for the rest of this week ending with our reflections on this Christmas Eve 2020.

The author suggests that one way we can borrow hope is to remember that there's a time and season for everything. What is this time for you? (Fill in the Blanks) A time for _____ and a time for _____. There's a lot of calamity going on in the world right, but how do we learn to meet calamity with serenity. Can we listen to Jesus' words in John 14:27 with a different perspective this Christmas season? On the last night with his disciples before he was betrayed He said, "Peace I leave with you: my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." What does meeting calamity with serenity look like for you right now? And how can we put into practice what we've learned. Here are a couple of the author's suggestions:

1. Write a simple prayer for yourself or for others who are on your heart right now

God, please help _____

I long for peace for _____

Thank you for _____

2. Look up. Go outside when it's dark and gaze up at the stars and let the sky speak to you somehow. Did anyone see the Star of Bethlehem (Saturn/Jupiter) this past week?

3. Consider who might need some extra love right now (friend, family member, coworker) Offer some tangible encouragement such as a card, text, email. Lend them some of your hope.

Christmas Eve Reflections- God is With Us

We think it is truly fitting that we reflect on the lyrics of the Christmas Hymn, "O Holy Night" on this Christmas Eve. We are all familiar with the words from the title of our book, "A thrill of hope a Weary World rejoices." But how many of us have read or listened carefully to the words from the second verse from this same song?

"The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,

In all our trials born to be our friend:

He knows our need, To our weakness no stranger!"

Our wish for you this Christmas Eve is to always remember that God chose to enter this world in the midst of chaos, born to unlikely parents in a smelly stable. We couldn't find a better way of expressing our prayers and wishes to all of you than how the author explains it when she says that God is still with us in the thick of it – "in our humanity, our pain, or blue, our beautiful, our hard, our messy, our ugly, our struggles, our joys." As God is with Us, we are also called to be with others in the mess of their real lives. "God with Us in the thick of our messy lives. Us, with Others, in the thick of their messy, beautiful lives." That is how we choose to celebrate Christmas Eve today. As this weary world rejoices, we pray our weary hearts and yours can too. No one is ever alone and that is all the reason we need to rejoice. Merry Christmas from Cory and Julie.