

Silver and Gold Have We None



TONY LEE 2009

**Church of Steadfast
Love
Advent
2024**

During the Season of Advent we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the Christ. We celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas, and we remember that in him the Kingdom of God came to earth. Now we wait expectantly for his return, not as the baby that was once worshipped in the manger, but as our Savior that will come again and restore all things unto himself.

As Christmas approaches the busyness of our lives traditionally increase as gift buying and parties are added to our daily routines, but not everyone has the comforts that many of us enjoy without giving them a second thought. It is for this reason that we call our devotional, "Silver and Gold Have We None." Those whom we serve have not the material possessions that our society prizes, but they have the wonderful gifts of hope and promise. And we, those who find ourselves on the streets this holiday seasons, in the shelters, and securely housed, would like to share of ourselves with you this season.

May you find this devotional useful for increasing and deepening faith as you reflect on the Living Word, and on our humble insights.

Peace be with you this Advent season and throughout the coming year. Come Lord Jesus.

Amen.

Pr. Kristy Daniels



December 1

1st Sunday in Advent

Luke 21:25-36

Lk 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." ²⁹ Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³⁴ "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Amen.

Excessive drinking is never appropriate. It is not productive. I'm not my best self when drinking. What helps me to not drink is not thinking about it. So spending time with others and staying in a positive frame of mind helps. Not having my mind on negative things, it is not easy. Being around good people helps. Thinking about others that are good. Personal security, self, property and family are important. Also, important: routine, exercise, sleep and eat well.

Amen.

-Bobby Dempsey

Monday, December 2

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

¹Th 3:9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. ¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. ¹³ And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

This is an inspiring set of verses and reminds us, especially in verse 10 to pray for each other. I find it encouraging that it reminds us to be in community. Paul writes about seeing the group in person, a reminder that we as Christians are a community, that we are not on this journey alone. This is important as community provides us with so much time to ensure events, people to support us in our time of need, opportunities to be of service to others.

It also gave a reminder to love another, which I appreciate. It's a reminder that we are simply to love one another, which sometimes can be difficult to do. The nice thing about the Bible's concept of loving one another is that there are no codicils, asterixis or exceptions, we are simply to love one another. That mixed with community and prayer are great things for us as Christians to do.

-Geoff Goucher

Tuesday, December 3

Psalm 25:1-10

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ² O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. ³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. ⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. ⁵ Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. ⁶ Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD! ⁸ Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. ⁹ He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. ¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

SEÑOR, a ti dirijo mis súplicas. ² Dios mío, en ti confío, por eso nunca seré humillado, y mis enemigos nunca me vencerán. ³ Quien crea en ti nunca será derrotado; pero en cambio, los traidores serán derrotados y quedarán con las manos vacías. ⁴ SEÑOR, enséñame a vivir a tu manera. Muéstrame el camino que tú seguirías. ⁵ Guíame y enséñame tu verdad, porque tú eres mi Dios y Salvador, y en ti pongo siempre toda mi esperanza. ⁶ SEÑOR, recuerda siempre ser bueno y misericordioso conmigo, como lo has sido siempre. ⁷ Olvida, SEÑOR, los pecados que cometí en mi juventud cuando fui un rebelde. Muéstrame tu bondad, recuérdame con fiel amor. ⁸ El SEÑOR es bueno y justo. Por eso les enseña a los pecadores el camino correcto. ⁹ Él guía a los humildes por el buen camino; les enseña a vivir a su manera. ¹⁰ El SEÑOR muestra siempre su fiel amor y lealtad a quienes siguen su pacto y sus testimonios.

Yo le pido y le-suplico a mi Dios ano ser humillado y que mis enemigos se rieron de mí. Que mi Dios me ensene a vivir. A su manera y no a la mía yo quiero que el Señor siempre sea bueno conmigo y misericordioso Dios que perdone mis pecados cuando fui joven. Que mi padre Jehová siempre este conmigo y que todo el tiempo todos los días me de amor, paz y amistad. Todos los días me de amor, paz y amistad. Que mi Dios, Jehová, este siempre conmigo amen. Aleluya, aleluya.

I ask and beg my God not to let me be humiliated and have my enemies laugh at me. May my God teach me how to live, in His is way and not mine, I want the Lord to always be good to me and a merciful God to forgive my sins when I was young. May my father Jehovah always be with me and may he give me love, peace and friendship all the time every day. Every day he gives me love, peace and friendship. May my God, Jehovah, always be with me amen. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

-Margarito Perez

Wednesday, December 4

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Jer 33:14 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

God, spoke to Jeremiah the fateful day when, Lord first spoke to me. I had already chosen you to be My prophet to speak My word to the nations. Jeremiah spoke to Lord, AH I'm too young and inexperienced to speak for You. Eternal One you can and will go wherever I send you. You have no reason to fear the people you speak to, for I am with you and will defend you. That's right. In those days, when the time is right, I will cause a righteous Branch to sprout from the old stump of David's lineage; He will do what is right and just in the land. In those days. Judah will be liberated, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And the city will be called by His name, The Eternal Is Our Righteousness.

I experienced God's Word at my knee surgery. God said it would turn out good. God's Word is relief of safety and comfort.

-Von Rodriguez

Thursday, December 5

Malachi 3:1-4

Mal 3:1 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

This was the reading of the coming messenger in which had become corrupt priests during this time of the Bible, Malachi was representing God assuring us that when we return to God, that he would return to us. We are to pursue God for who he is, not just for what we want him to give us, for he has the final say, now considering within each and all of us is to have the acceptance in which we are gonna need is yes realizing that when the day of the Lord arrives, it has a two fold effect, the bringing down of the wicked and the lifting up the righteous, we must by all means choose within these days whom we are to serve. Amen. To God be all Glory and Praise.

-Danny Ray Lee

Friday, December 6

Luke 1:68-79

Lk 1:68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. ⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, ⁷⁰ as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, ⁷¹ that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. ⁷² Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us ⁷⁴ that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. ⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, ⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸ By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, ⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Salvation of faithfulness for the covenant of God to His servants. He promised salvation, mercy, forgiveness upon peoples and just the best part. I guess, High Priest giving salvation and setting aside a place to be known for righteousness pray for mercy and forgiveness of sin. Light is for peoples, faithfulness is for good of the peoples of the nations and the servants and holy people of church.

-Amos Silas

Saturday, December 7

Philippians 1:3-11

^{Php 1:3} I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴ constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵ because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

I'm thankful to the Church of Steadfast Love and I need prayers for my housing. I'm going to be one of the last ones in this place and anyway God has always been with me along the way. God with me keeping me safe and sheltered. I appreciate Him hearing my prayers. I'm blessed by people I meet along the way. People are a blessing in my life. The gifts I have received are too many to mention. Thank you to everyone.

-Billy Levins

December 8

2nd Sunday in Advent

Luke 3:1-6

Lk 3:1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

John the Baptist prepares the way for Christ's coming. He calls for people to be baptized in order to repent and be forgiven for sins. He quotes the words of Isaiah, the prophet to send a message that people need to straighten out their lives and prepare for the Lord.

-Mark Brustad

Monday, December 9

Titus 3:4-7

⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. ⁶ This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Notes: 1 Timothy 6:15 the King of Kings and Lord of Lords

Isaiah 9:6

Everlasting Father Prince of Peace

As I prayed God spoke to me, he wants us to be heirs of the Heavenly Gift by way of the Holy Spirit. Renewed heirs that inherit Heavenly Gifts right now in the living. Jesus's prince hood and kingship are what made him holy on earth. We can think of ourselves as heirs of the King. Also inheriting all the humble knowledge if we seek him. Amen.

-Robert Lind

Tuesday, December 10

Isaiah 52:7-10

^{Isa 52:7} How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."⁸ Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion.⁹ Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

God comes to us in different ways, and often in connection with others. I see the messenger of peace in this passage as someone who can share joy during good times and grace during difficult times. I believe joy and grace are the things God wants for us. and anyone who shares them is revealing some of the light from God's love. They are essentially announcing "Your God reigns," even if they don't say it directly. Sometimes we are the messenger announcing peace, and sometimes we are the ones to whom peace is announced. But wherever grace and joy is shared, God's light is revealed, and this truly is cause for rejoicing.

Your God reigns!

-Charles Smith

Wednesday, December 11

Psalm 98

O sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things.
His right hand and his holy arm
have gotten him victory.
² The Lord has made known his
victory; he has revealed his
vindication in the sight of the nations.
³ He has remembered his steadfast
love and faithfulness to the house of
Israel. All the ends of the earth have
seen the victory of our God.
⁴ Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all
the earth; break forth into joyous song
and sing praises.
⁵ Sing praises to the Lord with the
lyre, with the lyre and the sound of
melody.
⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the
horn make a joyful noise before the
King, the Lord.
⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.
⁸ Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy
⁹ at the presence of the Lord, for he is
coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with
righteousness, and the peoples with
equity.

Canten una nueva canción al SEÑOR,
porque él ha hecho maravillas. Su
mano derecha le dio la victoria, su
santo poder lo hizo.
² El SEÑOR ha mostrado su poder
para salvar; ante los ojos de las
naciones reveló que lo que él hace es
justo.
³ Dios se acordó de su fiel amor
y de su lealtad para con el pueblo
de Israel. La gente de tierras lejanas
vio lo que hizo Dios para salvarnos.
⁴ Que todo el mundo cante con
alegría al SEÑOR; que entonen
canciones alegres y toquen alegres
cantos.
⁵ Canten alabanzas al SEÑOR al son
del arpa; al son del arpa y con bellas
melodías.
⁶ Canten con alegría al SEÑOR,
nuestro Rey, al son de trompetas y
clarines.
⁷ Que brome el mar y todo lo que hay
en ellos; el mundo y todos los que lo
habitan.
⁸ Que los ríos aplaudan; que todas las
montañas juntas festejen con cantos.
⁹ Cántenle al SEÑOR, porque él
viene a juzgar al mundo. Él gobernará
al mundo con justicia, a los pueblos
con imparcialidad.

Me siento verde sido porque no tengo todo lo que quiero. Espero que mi asilo político sea aprobáis con permiso de trabajo y tener a gusto en mi corazón siempre.

I feel I know this because I don't have all I want. I hope my political asylum application with permission to work is approved and I have comfort in my heart always.

-Edgard David

Thursday, December 12

Zephaniah 3:14-20

^{Zep 3:14} Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. ¹⁷ The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing ¹⁸ as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. ¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰ At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

The Day Of The Lord

The meaning of this passage is God is always a God of restoration and Hope. Zephaniah was a prophet in the reign of King Josiah. Amid the restoration, the Lord commands Zion (the name Zion refers to both a hill in Jerusalem, Zion means “Holy Place” of the Kingdom) to sing with joy and rejoice with gladness. The Lord has taken away their enemy, the Lord has replaced their fear with assurance of His presence.

God’s justice comes from His passion for protecting and rescuing His world from evil and violence.

I feel the presence of God whenever I wake up because He lives inside me. I sing when I cook and enjoy my breakfast lunch dinner or step outside and see the wonderful of His creation. Probably this is a good one where I felt glad when you gave me the 25-dollar gift card and went back home and listened to my music. 🙌

-Enrique Urizar

Friday, December 13

Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the Lord God is my strength and my might;
he has become my salvation.

³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of
salvation. ⁴ And you will say in that day:

Give thanks to the Lord,
call on his name;
make known his deeds among the nations;
proclaim that his name is exalted.

⁵ Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

God is great!!

-Auto accident in 1988. Feb. 2, 1988, driving on black ice, truck turned in front of me. I knew I could not stop to avoid hitting his truck. I prayed to God, "please help me. I don't want to die, but I'll go if you want me. Seconds later I hit the 2nd to last axel of the 18 wheeler. Even though I sustained a broken ankle in 6 places, and crashed through the windshield, had I hit the truck split seconds earlier, I would have been decapitated. God was definitely with me, as well as my ceased mom of two years.

-Patty Shernock

Saturday, December 14

Philippians 4:4-7

^{Php 4:4} Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Those among us who choose to retreat to prayer and reflection when faced with life's challenges can draw strength from the teachings of these passages, We can pray to experience the peace of God, a state that can be beyond the reach of our understanding. We may not be able to explain this, but it is comforting to know God can respond to our prayers and pleadings when we may need it the most. We certainly can rejoice in the Lord, even when we can't rejoice in other things.

Do not worry about anything, as Paul wrote, but in everything send your prayers to God. God promises to be with us always, and God never breaks a promise. No problem in the world cannot be overcome by God's peace. This peace comes from knowing and believing that God the Father is always near us.

-David Shexnayder

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” ¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with ^b the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Jesus tells his followers how they should behave. The message is simple and profound: If you have two coats, and your neighbor has none—give one of yours. If you have food, share it. If you are a public official, do not threaten people, or if a soldier do not frighten people to give you things.

Jesus likens this to caring for a tree, so it bears plentiful fruit. It is a way of life that improves society.

-Mary Douglas

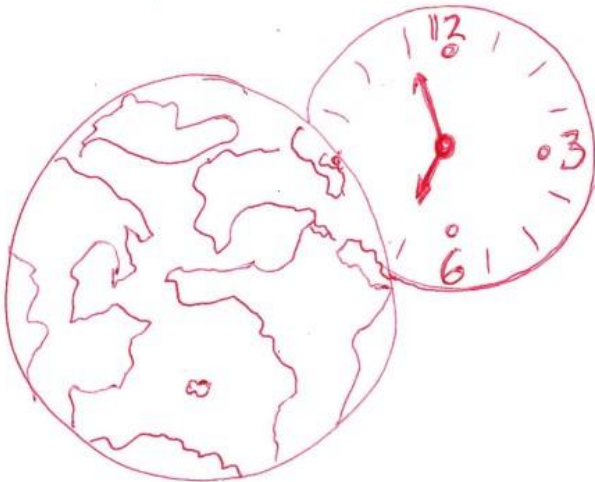
Monday, December 16

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

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This part of scripture strengthens my faith in God. It reassures me that despite there being sin on earth it was as God desired because he sent his son to forgive us of our sins. The strength it shows in the prophecies in the Bible, the passage of time, and the actual occurrence of those prophecies.



-Aaron Young

Tuesday, December 17

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

It's beautiful. I love learning knowledge. I wish the Word of God would spread more often. I wish bad, hard things wouldn't drive people away. I wish we had trust, so we didn't have to lock cars or houses. The light over darkness really captivated me. People really need to know God and His everlasting love and that they won't perish. You know when God is there, you will tear up and cry like a baby, it is the most beautiful thing. God has brought me to my knees several times. Beautiful. There are no words for the beauty of God. I am afraid of evil taking over and making me give up. I am at the brink of giving up. I have never been this low in my life. Everything keeps getting worse and worse. I think God is testing me for endurance and things still get worse. That scares me. This takes me back to verse 5: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Beautiful. God bless. Believe in the Lord forever. Amen.

-John Wessman

Wednesday, December 18

Micah 5:2-5a

Mic 5:2 " But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

God used His prophets to let people know He would send a Savior, but with Micah God told him the Tribe & town. It was a small town among a large tribe of brothers & sisters. God used this small town to bring about His Glory of providing a savior. The smaller the better so God's Glory shines through.

-Michelle Dickinson

Thursday, December 19

Luke 1:46-55

Lk 1:46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The first time I met my forever son I read him a story, as I was reading the story he leaned on my leg. His foster father, at the time, said that was the first time that he ever connected with anyone. From that moment on my son and I had a bond. I believe we both have found love, peace, hope and the beginning of family.

-Frances Skeete

Friday, December 20

Psalm 80:1-7

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth ² before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us! ³ Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved. ⁴ O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? ⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure. ⁶ You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves. ⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

"Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved."

"Restoration" is what I find myself constantly begging to find. If somehow I had not done enough good in my little life. There is also the chance I am not grateful enough that He saved me. Why? What am I supposed to do/find? I feel as lost as my sense of stability. Most days my energy level is high in the morning but afternoons find naps are needed and even so, the dizziness becomes magnified. Twenty times (minimum) a day I give up but upon blinking find I am still here so I keep trying. I am lost all the time Pastor Kristy. Please tell God.

-Tuesday S.

Saturday, December 21

Hebrews 10:5-10

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;
⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

⁸ When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Burnt and sin offerings absolved those who made them from sin on a temporary basis in the material world on earth. Jesus' sacrifice of himself on the cross absolves us of sin for all time--past, present and future in the spiritual world on earth and in heaven.

Does this mean that we are free, then, to sin again and again at will? I don't think so. We are free to love God and others, and to live our lives accordingly. We are human and, therefore, will sin again even when we are doing our best not to.

God sees into our hearts and Jesus' sacrifice has absolved us. Therefore, being sinful is not cause to cease being kind and loving. Jesus loved us so much that he gave his life for us, and we then do our best to be loving and grateful, not to be absolved of sin, but because Jesus loves us. Jesus death on the cross was not a burnt or sin offering, it was an offering of love and forgiveness.

-Maggie Smith

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be^[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Having learned from the angel that she will give birth to the Son of God, Mary hurries to visit her pregnant relative Elizabeth in the hill country. The intimate conversation that follows portrays Jesus as more important than John. Mary is blessed not only for her status as the mother of the Lord, but also for her trust in God's promise. Elizabeth's words and actions invite us to reflect on our own openness to the ways that God chooses to act in our world. What is God doing through unexpected people in our society today? Where is God at work through people whom our neighbors and fellow church members often exclude or treat as shameful? May we, like them, become a community that supports each other as we hope and wait for Christ to return.

Monday, December 23

Isaiah 9:2-7

Isa 9:2 " The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴ For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Did Isaiah get it wrong in this passage? I don't think so. He's proclaiming the coming of the savior and the bringing of God's grace to the world. His description of that coming is in the form of worldly governance so people could grasp the power in a way they could understand. In reality, it's a much bigger gift.

Christ coming looks to the power of the spirit. Christ brings with him God's understanding of the frailty of the human condition. The kingdom that Christ speaks of is the kingdom of the spirit, the one in three the three and one. In that beautiful gift our sins are washed clean.

At this time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, let us remember that God's kingdom is bigger than any government any country any group of people. The forgiveness Christ brings gives us access to Gods Kingdom and a connection with the Holy Spirit.

-Harvey Smith

Tuesday, December 24

Psalm 96

O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.

² Sing to the LORD, bless his
name;
tell of his salvation from day to
day.

³ Declare his glory among the
nations,
his marvelous works among all
the peoples. ⁴ For great is
the LORD, and greatly to be
praised;
he is to be revered above all
gods.

⁵ For all the gods of the peoples
are idols,
but the LORD made the
heavens.

⁶ Honor and majesty are before
him;
strength and beauty are in his
sanctuary. ⁷ Ascribe to the LORD,
O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and

strength.

⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory
due his name; bring an offering,
and come into his courts.

⁹ Worship the LORD in holy
splendor;
tremble before him, all the
earth.

¹⁰ Say among the nations,
“The LORD is king! The world is
firmly established; it shall never
be moved. He will judge the
peoples with equity.” ¹¹ Let the
heavens be glad, and let the earth
rejoice;

let the sea roar, and all that fills
it; ¹² let the field exult, and
everything in it. Then shall all the
trees of the forest sing for joy
¹³ before the LORD; for he is
coming, for he is coming to judge
the earth. He will judge the world
with righteousness, and the
peoples with his truth.

**No matter what, God is in control, He is sovereign and
righteous and if you believe in His son you shall not
perish but have eternal life and no man goes to the
Father except through the Son. Amen.**

-Reggie Carey

Wednesday, December 25

Titus 2:11-14

^{Tit 2:11} For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

We love Jesus Christ with faith and heart. We walk by faith and love of life. God bless the congregation. Have a wonderful holiday! Happy New Year 2025!

-Willie Heard

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