

*Oh Come Let Us
Adore Him* 

Advent Devotion 2024

Week Two

Scripture Readings · Reflections

Monday, December 9, 2024

Luke 1:68-79

“Bless the Lord God of Israel because he has come to help and has delivered his people. ⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty savior for us in his servant David’s house, ⁷⁰ just as he said through the mouths of his holy prophets long ago. ⁷¹ He has brought salvation from our enemies and from the power of all those who hate us. ⁷² He has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and remembered his holy covenant, ⁷³ the solemn pledge he made to our ancestor Abraham. He has granted ⁷⁴ that we would be rescued from the power of our enemies so that we could serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness in God’s eyes, for as long as we live. ⁷⁶ You, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way. ⁷⁷ You will tell his people how to be saved through the forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸ Because of our God’s deep compassion, the dawn from heaven will break upon us, ⁷⁹ to give light to those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide us on the path of peace.”

Reflection: An honest look at our lives show that we have sometimes taken wrong turns on the highways of life’s journey, and stumbled along the way. But now is the time to return to the Lord our God. As we look toward Advent, we are each called to repent and to prepare ourselves for the coming of God’s savior into our lives. This Advent, let’s pray that our lights will shine so brightly that it will be as Isaiah said, “All flesh, all humanity, all people throughout the world and all of creation shall see the salvation of God.”

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Philippians 1:3-11

³ I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. ⁴ I’m thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it’s always a prayer full of joy. ⁵ I’m glad because of the way you have been my partners in the ministry of the gospel from the time you first believed it until now. ⁶ I’m sure about this: the one who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job by the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ I have good reason to think this way about all of you because I keep you in my heart. You are all my partners in God’s grace, both during my time in prison and in the defense and support of the

gospel. ⁸ God is my witness that I feel affection for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

⁹ This is my prayer: that your love might become even more and more rich with knowledge and all kinds of insight. ¹⁰ I pray this so that you will be able to decide what really matters and so you will be sincere and blameless on the day of Christ. ¹¹ I pray that you will then be filled with the fruit of righteousness, which comes from Jesus Christ, in order to give glory and praise to God.

Reflection: As St. Francis of Assisi was digging in his garden he was asked, “If Jesus were to return today, what would you do?” Without hesitation, Francis answered, “I would continue gardening.” Confident that he was ready to meet the King, Francis would keep about his business until Jesus’ arrival. In today’s text, Paul expresses similar confidence in the Philippians. Seeing all the good that God had begun in them, he was certain that God would continue bringing it to completion until “the day of Christ Jesus.” Are you prepared for the Messiah’s return? Would you be so calm if you heard Jesus was coming back today?

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Malachi 3:1-4

Look, I am sending my messenger who will clear the path before me; suddenly the Lord whom you are seeking will come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you take delight is coming, says the Lord of heavenly forces. ² Who can endure the day of his coming? Who can withstand his appearance? He is like the refiner’s fire or the cleaner’s soap.

³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver. He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. They will belong to the Lord, presenting a righteous offering. ⁴ The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in ancient days and in former years.

Reflection: In the process of refining silver, the silver is held in the hottest part of the flame to burn away all impurities. The silver must be watched the entire time. If left a moment too long in the flames, it will be destroyed. The silver is fully refined when the silver smith can see his image in it. How has your heart been refined this year? How might you be complacent about the tarnished areas of your heart? Find time each day to sit quietly

with the Refiner, letting Christ mold you until he sees his image reflected brightly in you.

Thursday, December 12, 2024

Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the desert of Judea announcing, ²“Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!” ³ He was the one of whom Isaiah the prophet spoke when he said:

*The voice of one shouting in the wilderness,
“Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight.”^[a]*

⁴ John wore clothes made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey.

⁵ People from Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and all around the Jordan River came to him. ⁶ As they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. ⁷ Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized by John. He said to them, “You children of snakes! Who warned you to escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon? ⁸ Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives. ⁹ And don’t even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham’s children from these stones. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire. ¹¹ I baptize with water those of you who have changed your hearts and lives. The one who is coming after me is stronger than I am. I’m not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹² The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can’t be put out.”

Reflection: John the Baptist was full of the Holy Spirit. But he could not send that Spirit into anyone, he could only inspire. He could not give others the presence of God; he could only tell them to prepare for the One who could and would give it. Repentance is a key way of preparing for the coming of Christ. In what ways would repentance help you prepared to meet Christ this Christmas and at his return?

Friday, December 13, 2024

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Rejoice, Daughter Zion! Shout, Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem. ⁵ The Lord has removed your judgment; he has turned away your enemy. The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst; you will no longer fear evil. ¹⁶ On that day, it will be said to Jerusalem: Don't fear, Zion. Don't let your hands fall. ¹⁷ The Lord your God is in your midst—a warrior bringing victory. He will create calm with his love; he will rejoice over you with singing.

¹⁸ I will remove from you those worried about the appointed feasts.^[a] They have been a burden for her, a reproach.

¹⁹ Watch what I am about to do to all your oppressors at that time. I will deliver the lame; I will gather the outcast. I will change their shame into praise and fame throughout the earth.

²⁰ At that time, I will bring all of you back, at the time when I gather you. I will give you fame and praise among all the neighboring peoples when I restore your possessions and you can see them^[b]—says the Lord.

Reflection: The Lord is coming, to change shame into praise. It is easy to forget the joy and be bogged down in all the things of life, but he is the refuge and comfort of the overworked and the exhausted as much as of the lame and the outcast. In the midst of insane rushing around with cooking, and tree decorating, and running through immense crowds to buy last minute presents, we still need to find time for the wild outpouring of joy in the surety of his love for us. We need to look beyond our seasonal preoccupation and appreciate the exhilaration of the birth.

Saturday, December 14, 2024

Isaiah 12:2-6

God is indeed my salvation; I will trust and won't be afraid.

Yah, the Lord, is my strength and my shield; he has become my salvation.”

³ You will draw water with joy from the springs of salvation. ⁴ And you will say on that day: “Thank the Lord; call on God's name; proclaim God's deeds among the peoples; declare that God's name is exalted. ⁵ Sing to the Lord, who has done glorious things; proclaim this throughout all the earth.”

⁶ Shout and sing for joy, city of Zion, because the holy one of Israel is great among you.

Reflection: Just these few lines convey the power of the ever-present Spirit. Yes, life is created out of moments of serious decisions, serious joys, serious love, serious pain and serious hope. And throughout all of this, there is a hand extended for us to hold. There is a well of infinite salvation. For this, Isaiah says sing! We must realize that God's love, comfort and salvation are truly within the grasp of our hands -- whether we are wringing them, reaching with exultation, raising them in defeat or pressing them in prayer, these powerful gifts are ours.