

Devotion for Advent 1

Psalm 25:1-11

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God.

Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame,

but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse.

Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.

Remember, O Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in His ways.

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way.

All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of His covenant.

For the sake of your name, O Lord, forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.

He will spend his days in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land.

The Lord confides in those who fear Him; he makes His covenant known to them.

My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only He will release my feet from the snare.

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Jeremiah 33:1-26

The Mercy of the Lord promises healing

- 1) Why did the Lord bring destruction on Jerusalem?
- 2) What moved the Lord to promise healing and restoration?
- 3) How did the birth of Jesus fulfill God's promises?

Luke 21:1-38

Signs giving assurance of Christ's return

- 1) What motivated the widow to make her offering?
- 2) What will be required to endure the tumults of the last times?
- 3) How can we be prepared for service as we await Christ's return?

Watch Yourself

Luke 21:34

"But watch yourselves..."

We begin our preparations for Christmas, not with Christmas bible readings, but with words warning us to be alert for Christ's second coming. Jesus says, "*You do not know when that time will come...What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!*" Isn't Advent about remembering the promises of the Old Testament leading up to Christmas? The last Sundays of the Church Year seemed to have dealt with the theme of Christ's return sufficiently. We end the year with words urging us to watch for the second coming, why should we should begin the new year of the Church with words reminding us of the same thing? It seems a little redundant to be going over the same stuff again and so soon. But there are some things we can't be told to often to watch for. Could the captain of the Titanic have been told too many times to watch out for icebergs?

It is in this same spirit that the church year ends and begins with Jesus urging us to be watchful for His second coming into the world. Christmas is not an end in and of itself. It's a new beginning! The first Christmas led to the cross, where through the shedding of His blood and offering of His life, Jesus paid the debt for the sin of the world. He proclaimed His victory the following Sunday in His resurrection from the dead. Ever since that day Christmas points us to heaven, from where Christ will return and share the victory of the cross with all who believe, by giving us a share in his resurrection to eternal life. The great gifts of Christmas are the forgiveness of sin and the promise of dwelling in the house of the Lord forever. We are truly prepared for Christmas, when empowered by his Spirit, we watch for Jesus' return. We can never be told too often to watch for these good and gracious promises to be fulfilled.

**The Advent of Our King
(Public Domain)**

**The advent of our King our prayers must now employ,
And we must hymns of welcome sing, in strains of holy joy!**

**The everlasting Son, incarnate deigns to be,
Himself a servant's form puts on, to set His servants free.**

**O Zion's daughter rise, to meet your lowly King,
Nor let your faithless heart despise, the peace He comes to bring.**

**As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come again.
And His true members all unite with Him in heaven to reign.**

**Before the dawning day let sin's dark deeds be gone,
The sinful self be put away, the new self now put on.**

**All glory to the Son, who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one through all eternity!**

Prayer

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.” Bless us Lord with your Spirit that we may await with anticipation the coming of our King in the clouds with glory. Bless us with His presence now through your Holy Spirit in the gathering of believers. Open our eyes to see Jesus in the sacrament of His body and blood. Open our ears to His voice in the scriptures. Open our hearts to believe the promise of resurrection to a new and eternal life, spoken in our baptism into His death and resurrection. In Jesus' Name Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Benediction

Psalm 145:8

“The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”

Bible Knowledge Quiz

- 1) Which verse in Genesis is considered the first promise of the Redeemer?
- 2) What new name will be given to Jerusalem according to Ezekiel?
- 3) What does the name 'Jesus' mean?

Answers to last week's Quiz

- 1) Worship God (Revelation 19:10).
- 2) Roll up like a scroll (Revelation 6:14).
- 3) Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord Philippians 2:9-10).

