

“The Gift of Good News” written by Vernon Mukhlall

Mon Dec 17 He Rules With Righteousness And Justice “And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” Isaiah 11: 3 – 4. King Solomon prayed for wisdom and understanding (1Kings3: 9). He wanted the administrative skills to govern his people according to the principles of righteousness and justice. However, leaders after Solomon became rebellious and corrupted (Isaiah 1: 23). The people really needed a revival of righteousness and justice. They needed leaders to turn from their selfishness and give justice to the poor and the oppressed. Isaiah speaks of the Messiah who is coming to judge with equity and justice. The Messiah shall not judge with partiality or by looking at outward appearances. His judgment shall always be impartial and without bias or favoritism. Jesus is our Savior and He teaches us to judge others with righteousness and justice. Do we not hate those who based their judgment on appearance, false evidence or hearsay? Don’t we long for fair treatment from others? But do we use those fair standards to judge others? Only Christ can be the perfectly fair judge. Only as He governs our hearts can we learn to be as fair in our treatment of others as we expect others to be towards us. Prayer: Not all who lead us do so to bring about justice. But you, O God, sent your Son to guide us with your Spirit. Fill us with your wisdom, understanding, council and might so that we may treat others with love. Grant our leaders knowledge and wisdom so that they may rule with righteousness and justice. Amen.

Tue Dec 18 Be Anxious For Nothing “Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil 4: 6-7. Have you ever felt anxious, discouraged, and depressed when you weigh your problems against your abilities and find that you cannot come up with suitable solutions? When we look at the landscape of our lives, we will always face thorny problems that can be overwhelming for our limited abilities. However, we can control such feelings when we learn to take our problems to the One who says, “come to me ye who are weary and heavily burdened and I will give you rest”. Jesus wants us to pour out our feelings to Him and to break free from our preoccupation of the problems. We are to acknowledge our weakness and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of our Lord. Paul is telling us that we will feel the strongest when we are on our knees looking up to our God. We are to submit to God in prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving and allow Him who always works in our best interest. He is the only One who has the wisdom and power to deal effectively with our problems and to grant us peace. Prayer: Almighty God, your word has indicated to us that we will always have problems and face obstacles in this life which our limited abilities may not be able to handle. But you, O merciful and gracious Father, have called us to bring all our problem to you in prayer. Grant us the assurance and the peace of mind that you are the all-powerful God who can and will deal with them effectively. Amen.

“The Gift of Service” written by Dale Spivey

Wednesday, December 13th A Baby changes everything
“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. 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.” Micah 5:2-3 King Sennacherib lays siege to Jerusalem and the world feels out of control. Micah reminds the people in Bethlehem of God’s promise to bring a leader from David’s descendants. He is reminding God’s people of His promises. To have faith a baby is coming that will change the world. There is a bigger picture that we often forget in our lives. God is watching over us. “O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, The silent stars go by; Yet in thy darkness shineth The everlasting Light; The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight..... O holy Child of Bethlehem Descend to us, we pray Cast out our sin and enter in, Be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell: Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!” Phillips Brooks, 1868. How has this baby changed your life? That love flows through you to calm the fears around you. The promises God has made you allows you to grow and serve in Faith. Prayer: “Dear Lord, thank you for your Son who changed the world. Abide in us and help us to share your love and promises. Amen.”

Thursday, December 14th Rescue and restore us from ourselves.
“Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved. O Lord God of

hosts, how long will you be angry with your people’s prayers?” Psalm 80:3-4 God is angry because the people prayed for blessings while they oppressed others. It is so easy to get lost in our own lives and not see the suffering around us. We worry about buying Christmas presents while there are children without homes. These verses remind me to see my neighbors. To open my eyes to what is going on in the world and not stick my head in the sand. It is overwhelming to see the whole picture but God gives us our gifts to serve our neighbors. “He’s got the whole world in His hands” We don’t have to worry about the whole world but we need to be His light in the world. We can’t do that when we become absorbed in our own lives. When you smile at a stranger they generally smile back. When you hold a door open, others are thankful. There are always scrooges but there are more, tiny Tim’s who see the love being offered and reflect that love. Hearts can grow all year long but Christmas always brings more ways to share and see the love of Christ in the world. “Dear Lord, We apologize for only seeing our own needs and wants, help us to see ways to serve others. Amen.”

Friday, December 15th An overwhelming service of love for you.
“And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Hebrews 10:10 The song, “Mary, did you know” by Buddy Greene & Mark Lowry always makes me cry. “Mary did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters? Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new? This child that you’ve delivered, will soon deliver you.” The thought of Mary’s life carrying, loving, and grieving her child who is her Lord is too magnanimous. God’s will to save us is more love than I can truly comprehend. Jesus, one life in the world touching the lives of so many so extensively from the moment he was born throughout eternity. The true meaning of Christmas and the Gift we have been given turns our lives upside down. Would you be who you are without Christ? That love brings out the best in us and gives us strength to use our gifts in God’s world in small and big ways for all. “Dear Lord, You are the alpha and omega and you love us. Help us to share that love with the world. Amen.”

Saturday December 16th We know God is here and he knows us.
“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?” Luke 1:41-43 The Holy Spirit fills Elizabeth with that feeling of knowing that God is there. Music brings the Holy Spirit in a very tangible way to me. Often when I listen to the words of the songs we sing in Church I feel God’s presence. Stories of love, forgiveness and sacrifice can also open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. That moment when you get chills and you feel an overwhelming feeling of compassion. Jesus felt Elizabeth too and leapt in Mary’s womb. Just as he felt the woman who touched the hem of his garment later in life. Does this indicate that when we feel God, God also feels us? Elizabeth was so genuine in her response of identifying Christ and asking why me. This Gift of love is more than we deserve but calls us to serve. “Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay Close by me forever, and love me I pray Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care And take us to Heaven to live with Thee there” Away in a manger. “Dear Lord, Thank you for knowing us, watching over us, and loving us. Help us to teach others of your love so they can recognize you are with them. Amen.”

Sunday December 17th Our hearts and minds are changed
“Mary’s Song of Praise And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.” Luke 1, 46-49 Pregnancy brain is a thing according to scientificamerican.com “data is emerging that suggest human pregnancies initiate neural restructuring. A 2010 study found that in the first few months after giving birth, human females show changes in several key brain regions. Specifically, they often exhibit increased volume in the hypothalamus, striatum and amygdala—areas essential for emotional regulation and parental motivation—as well as in regions governing decision making and protective instincts.” Whether or not Mary’s brain was restructuring she was filled with love for the Christ child. She sang out about her love and the love God has for us. She has hope and praise for what God is doing in her world. I feel that knowing of God’s love restructures our brains if not our hearts causing us to “Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!” “Dear Lord, You changed us with Christ’s birth. Continue to help us to grow in your love and to share that love with our neighbors. Amen.”