

Community of Grace

Daily Walk for the week of December 28, 2020

“Lessons & Carols”

Written by Dale Spivey

December 28, 2020

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

“Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King, peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconcile.” Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!” Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!” Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

Simeon could see what we could not. **“Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.””**

Luke 2:27-31 It is an odd feeling when someone reveals something about you that you cannot see yourself. These are gifts to explore and questions and to learn from. I imagine at this point Mary and Joseph were starting to feel comfortable with Jesus, normalizing and forgetting the angels and miracles of His birth. Simeon reminds us all not to take it all for granted--this miracle birth that brought grace and love into our world.

“...born that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.” Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born king”. Prayer: “Help us to see what we need to see in our lives and remind us of your love when we forget it is always there. Amen.”

December 29, 2020

Go, Tell it On the Mountain

“Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere, go tell it on the mountain, Jesus Christ is born!” When journeys take us to our destination there is an excitement at finally reaching our goal. **“When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”**

Matthew 2:10-11 I wonder how Jesus changed their hearts that day. When the wise men walked up to the place, they had been traveling to for so long I bet they thought this was the end when really it was the beginning. How many times have you reached a goal for it to bring a new beginning? With the thought of New Year resolutions, think about this 2020 journey and what has changed in you. We have all had to adapt to so many changes in the last year. How will we grow from this? What intentional changes do we want to make? Prayer: “Dear Lord, help us to use the gifts You have given us. Grow in our hearts Your love dear Christ and help us to share those gifts with our neighbors over the hills and everywhere. Amen.”

“God With Us”

Written by Mary Anderson

Wednesday, December 30th**God’s Redemption**

“For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘Save, O lord, your people, the remnant of Israel. ...Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.’” Jeremiah 31:7, 10. In these verses of Jeremiah, praise is given to God as well as asking him to save and redeem them. In the Old Testament, a redeemer was a person’s nearest family member who paid the damages or ransom so the accused person could go free. The Lord acts as the next of kin and redeems the people from exile. As the people of Israel who were scattered were gathered into God’s arms as a shepherd cares for his flock, so will we be cared for by our God. We were saved by his Son, Jesus, whose birth we again experienced. Let us praise Him for all he is doing in our lives and share this good news with all his sheep, especially those who don’t know him. Prayer: Just one day, Lord is all we ask: one day to bask in your presence; one day to marvel at your handiwork; one day to feel your grace wash over us like rain; one day with you and we will be forever blessed. Amen

Thursday, December 31st**Comfort and Joy**

“Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, will give the priests their fill of fatness, my bounty, says the Lord.” Jer-

emiah 31:13-14. In this year of physical isolation because of the pandemic, we can still experience joy. Some churches have young girls and women do liturgical dance as a way to express God’s love and joy in music also. It can be a meaningful way to “feel” God’s love. Many have lost loved ones to Covid19 or other diseases this year and it does bring sorrow for us still living and we grieve. But they are experiencing everlasting joy in God’s presence and focusing on that can bring us joy in our sorrows. God is always there to comfort us, especially in this year when we have lost so much of our “normal”, in worship, social gatherings, holidays without extended family, and we all have more than enough to share with others. God is with us—feel the joy in that promise. Prayer: As humans, too often when we judge others it is to belittle or condemn them. Yet your judgment is clothed in your love, acceptance, and grace. Thank you for being the light in our world and in our lives, so we may serve you with joy. Amen

Friday, January 1st**Praise to the Lord**

“Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you.” Psalm 147:12-13. Psalm 147 is a psalm of praise for God’s children, Israel. We know God cares for us as well and we want to praise him in all we do. As I write this devotion, I check Facebook once again for news of the baby that Katie Wilson has been carrying, knowing God has been keeping her safe and she is finally here! Praise God! God blesses us in so many ways and many of us have experienced the joy that came with our own children’s birth or that of someone

close to us. Know God is always with us and praise his name, shout it to the heavens, and share that praise with everyone we come in contact with, even if it has to be virtually. Prayer: Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of your salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and praise for his name who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Saturday, January 2nd

God Cares For His People

“He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow. He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances. Praise the Lord! Psalm 147:18-20. God is at work here through his people, creating a just and fair world. We are called to praise God for all he did in Israel, to his chosen people, giving them laws to follow and watching over them. Then Jesus came for all people to share God’s love with Jews and Gentiles alike. We should praise God for his faithfulness to his chosen people, to those he promised a savior and king which we came to know as his son, Jesus, who came as a baby and grew into a man who showed a new way to live, telling all people of his sacrifice on the cross so we all may be saved from our sins. He is always with us, watching over us. Praise be to our God and Lord! Prayer: King of Kings, your glory surpasses heaven and earth. Fill us with wonder as we encounter the Word made flesh, your Son, Jesus Christ. Transform us into a people who embody your love with our whole lives. Amen

Sunday, January 3rd

God’s Light

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.” John 1:1-4. John’s gospel is not concerned with Jesus’ family tree but with his true identity in the word of God. Jesus is one with the Father. “In the beginning” reminds us of the story of creation in Genesis when God gave us the light. God has always been in charge of our universe and he brought Jesus into the world so we might know him. As a baby is welcomed into the world and is precious in our sight as well as God’s, so were we all welcomed into God’s kingdom. Jesus was a light to all people and we need to be the light for others, showing them the way to the Father and his love for us as shown on the day of Jesus’ birth as a baby. What a joyous day that was and let us remember all he has done for us. Prayer: O God our redeemer, you created light that we might live, and you illumine our world with you beloved son. By your spirit comfort us in all the darkness and turn us toward the light of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen