

Devotion for Advent 3

Psalm 85

Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin.

You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.

Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us!

Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.

Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.

Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness will go before Him and make His footsteps a way.

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

Isaiah 40:1-31

The Lord's Comfort

Why is God's word of central importance?

In what ways does the word make God's greatness known to us?

How does God give us strength when we are weary?

Matthew 1:1-25

The birth of Jesus

Why is Jesus' human genealogy important?

Why did Jesus need to be conceived by the Holy Spirit?

Why was He named "Jesus" and "Immanuel?"

"Good News"

In the ancient world runners would relay messages between commanders in the field of battle and bring news of victory or defeat, to those who waited behind the lines. The better the news the faster the messenger ran. The bearer of good news often received a reward for his efforts. A messenger would probably not hurry to deliver bad news. He wouldn't receive a reward. It might even cost him his neck.

The marathon originated in ancient Greece, the Spartans and Athenians won an almost miraculous victory against the mighty Persian Empire near the village of Marathon. The runner ran so fast with the good news that when he completed the 25 miles and delivered his message, he fell down dead! That wasn't good news, but it shows how important the news was to him and how eager his Athenian masters were to hear it.

As Christians we have even greater news to share; the good news of Jesus' victory over sin, the devil and death. Jesus was born into the world to battle against the greatest tyrants; sin, the devil and death. He won the victory through His cross. He publishes peace with God through His resurrection.

He sends believers throughout the earth to publish the good news of His victory, which gives salvation and peace with God to all who believe. We have good news to share at Advent, during the Christmas season and always; the good news of forgiveness, peace with God and eternal life for the sake of Christ Jesus. Jesus won the greatest victory! God offers the fruits of His victory for all to receive. Truly Isaiah sang: "*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation...*"

**The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came
(Public Domain)**

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
“All Hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary.
Most highly favoured Lady”
Gloria!**

**“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee:
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favoured Lady”
Gloria!**

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.
“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy name.”
Most highly favoured Lady”
Gloria!**

**Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born.
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn.
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
Most highly favoured Lady”
Gloria!**

Prayer

Dearest Jesus as we prepare to celebrate your birth, bless us with hearts that desire to share your name with others and proclaim your victory. Give us feet that are eager to run with the good news and lips that publish the peace of forgiveness through faith in your 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

Isaiah 54:10

“For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed.”

Bible Knowledge Quiz

Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem to register for the census?
What Old Testament book foretells Bethlehem as the place of Jesus’ birth?
What book calls “Jesus” the name above all names?

Answers to last week’s Quiz

Samuel (1 Samuel 1:19).
Leah the mother of Judah, the tribe of David (Genesis 29:31-35; Matthew 1:17).
Hagar (Genesis 16:15).

