



# Images from Isaiah

Advent

2 0 2 3

## Wednesday Advent Devotion #2 – December 13, 2023

### We Praise Our God and Prepare Our Hearts

PASTOR: We worship our gracious God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – thanking him for all of his blessings this Advent.

**CONG: But, God’s undeserved love through Jesus is his very best gift to us.**

In this Second Wednesday of Advent, our wait for the Savior is over. God Himself has come to us tonight through his wonderful Word – *let’s prepare our hearts to meet him!*

*(sung)* **Arise, O Christian people! Prepare yourselves today.** (CW 310:1)

**Prepare to greet the Savior who takes your sins away.**

**To us by grace alone the truth and light were giv’n;**

**The promised Lord from heaven to all the world is shown.**

Dear friends in Jesus, the prophet Isaiah comforted God’s people with promises of their coming Savior. But the people needed to wait many centuries to witness the fulfillment of the Advent of their Messiah.

**And they struggled as they waited – wondering if God would really keep his promise to come as he said.**

Our struggle to wait is a reality too. God seems slow in keeping his promise and we may even wonder if He will. But those doubts are the products of our sinful hearts. It produces the very real fear that our sins are too great for God to forgive. Or that God won’t really follow through on his promise to rescue us. God longs to save us, to forgive us, and to heal us. So we bring our lack of faith together with all our sins confess to our holy God tonight...

*(sung)* **Prepare the way before him, prepare for him the best. (CW 310:2)**  
**Cast out what would offend him, this great, this heav'nly guest.**  
**Make straight, make plain the way: The lowly valleys raise,**  
**The heights of pride abasing; his path all even lay.**

Father in heaven, we confess that we do not always find our greatest joy and comfort in your promise that Jesus HAS COME and WILL COME again. Instead, we often seek gratification in things we can buy and do; in your temporary blessings.

**Again this Advent season, we have already been distracted by our own needs.**

We are consumed with the less important preparations of the season and have ignored the preparation of our hearts. Lord, we are truly sorry for our sins and know we deserve your eternal punishment for them.

**Forgive us, O God - we trust in your unfailing love!**

*(sung)* **The humble heart and lowly God raises up on high; (CW 310:3)**  
**Beneath his feet in terror the haughty soul shall lie.**  
**The heart sincere and right, that heeds God's overture**  
**And makes true preparation: It is the Lord's delight.**

God's precious people, remember that Jesus DID COME that first Christmas! Your heavenly Father sent his Son to save you! He kept his promise to those OT believers and he has kept his promise to you. So, the "peace on earth" proclaimed by the Christmas angel, is YOUR peace! Jesus CAME to pay for your sin and earn your forgiveness. And that is what you are: FORGIVEN! Enjoy your peace – praise your God!!

*(sung)* **Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus; turn not from me aside, (CW 310:4)**  
**And help me to receive you this blessed Advent-tide.**  
**From stall and manger low come now to dwell in me;**  
**I'll sing your praises gladly and forth your glory show.**

*Words: Valentin Thilo (1607-1662), alt., trans. Arthur T. Russell (1806-1874), alt., public domain*  
*Music: (ARISE) K. Koepsell, 2012. All rights reserved. Used by permission.*

## **Our Prayer for Faith**

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for coming to us in your Word of Truth tonight. You have assured us of your wonderful forgiveness so we are free from our sins and ready to live

for you! As we thank you with our lives, lead us to especially treasure our time with your promises.

**You have given us your Word for our good. Help us to listen and apply it for our own benefit and to your glory. In your name, Lord, Jesus. Amen.**

## **Today's Devotion – Isaiah 40:1-11**

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her. Her warfare really is over. Her guilt is fully paid for. Yes, she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup>A voice is calling out: In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD. In the wasteland make a level highway for our God. <sup>4</sup>Every valley will be raised up, and every mountain and hill will be made low. The rugged ground will become level, and the rough places will become a plain. <sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh together will see it. Yes, the mouth of the LORD has spoken. <sup>6</sup>A voice was saying, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry out?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like a wildflower in the countryside. <sup>7</sup>Grass withers, flowers fade, when the breath of the LORD blows on them. Yes, the people are grass. <sup>8</sup>Grass withers, flowers fade, but the Word of our God endures forever. <sup>9</sup>Get up on a high mountain, O Zion, you herald of good news. Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, you herald of good news. Lift it up! Do not be afraid! Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" <sup>10</sup>Look, God the LORD will come with strength, and his arm is ruling for him. Look, his reward is with him. The result of his work is in front of him. <sup>11</sup>Like a shepherd he will care for his flock. With his arm he will gather the lambs. He will lift them up on his lap. He will gently lead the nursing mothers.

*Things I'd like to remember this week...*

***Advent Images from Isaiah:  
The Coming Savior Multiplies Your Comfort***

## **Our Thank-Offering**

*<sup>17</sup> I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High. - Psalm 7:17*



*ilutheran.org/imhere*

## Our Evening Prayer

Praise and thanks are yours, Lord Jesus. Our humble hearts acknowledge that we could not save ourselves. But you have battled sin, death, and the forces of hell for us. Glory be to your name forever and ever! Come, Lord Jesus, and take us to the glories of your eternal kingdom, where we will join the hosts of heaven in singing your praise: *“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”* (Rev. 5:12). Now hear each of our hearts as we pray...

**I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

## The Comfort of the Gospel – 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

## Closing Blessing

*2 Corinthians 13:14*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Amen!**

## Our Closing Prayer – “The Advent of Our King”

*(CW 309:1-4)*



**Musician:** Joel Putz

**Worship Leader:** Pastor Paul Bowe