

Lessons for The Second Sunday in Advent

December 10, 2023

Psalm 85 ~ *Trusting in God's mercy shown in the past, his people await his restoration and renewal.*

Isaiah 40:1–11 ~ *God raised the hopes of His people with words of comfort and renewal.*

2 Peter 3:8–14 ~ *Since time is relative with God, we must wait patiently, as we trust God's promise.*

Mark 1:1–8 ~ *As John was baptizing, he was preparing the way for One more powerful than he.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Preparing Hopefully for God's Promise

To his people in exile, longing for Jerusalem, Isaiah spoke God's encouraging words of comfort and kindled hope in their hearts for a return to Zion. We know that same hope placed in God's sure promise of a new heaven and new earth prepared for us through Jesus' suffering death and victorious resurrection. He is the more powerful One for whom John was the messenger preparing the way for people to welcome Jesus in their hearts as their Savior from sin.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: O Lord, the hopes and fears of all the years were gathered in Bethlehem the night of Jesus' birth. Comfort my daily fears with the abiding hope of the Messiah, who has come to free me from the power of sin and death. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: While we wait hopefully for Christ's return, we recognize that many who don't know our Savior are filled with dread at the thought of His coming. God has given us opportunity and means to fill their hearts with the hope of redemption on the last day.

OFFERING PRAYER: For Your gifts from heaven above
We thank and praise You, Lord, today.
May these gifts we bring in love,
Fill hearts with hope for Jesus' way. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: The dangers of our waiting are that we either become complacent and ignore the signs or anxious and lose all hope. With the Word of His constant promise, God raises our hopes in the One who is still yet to come, because we have been sought and found by the One who is more powerful even than the despair that would destroy us. This One is the Son of God and is strong to rescue us.

Questions to Consider: How do we hear God's promise when all hope is lost?

- What comfort did Isaiah bring to a grieving Jerusalem?
- Why can we hope for a new heaven and earth even though this world is facing destruction?
- Why was John's message so appealing to the crowds from Jerusalem?
- What about God's message gives us hope when our confidence in his promise is threatened?

Page 2 – Bonus: As Lightening Rends the Sky

In the midst of threats and disasters, our hope lies in God and his mercy.

As Lightning Rends the Sky

Isaiah 64:1-9

As lightning rends the sky with thunder crash
and mountains quake with molten lava flow,
we yearn for God to come with power and dash
the wretched curse of sin. Then all would know
there is no other God! The prophets told
the awesome deeds that glorified His name.
God's saving actions made His people bold,
and they in turn were proud to spread His fame.
But now in gentle form and human skin
God comes to melt our crusty hearts today.
He holds us in His hand, and once again
He turns our broken lives like potter's clay.
Trust God to mold you in His will, and then
He'll fashion you according to His plan.

– Gilbert A. Franke, 11/18/08