

Lessons for The First Sunday in Advent

December 2, 2018

Psalm 25:1-10 ~ *An expression of trust in God's great mercy and love.*

Jeremiah 33:14-16 - *God promised safety for His people through the righteous branch of David.*

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 - *God will keep his faithful ones holy in Christ's righteousness until His return.*

Luke 21:25-36 - *The fig tree is a symbol of God's enduring promise of redemption in Christ's return.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Promise of Peace

In Jeremiah's day, God promised to set things right once again, through the promised Branch from King David's family tree. Jerusalem will be kept in safety and all of God's people made holy through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Branch of David, when He comes again at the end of days. Jesus pointed to a fig tree as a sign that even in the distress of these latter days, we may expect our redemption in the Person of Christ Himself, just as surely as summer follows the leaves of spring.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, help me watch faithfully for Your return just as Your people of old awaited Your birth so many years ago. Help me hold firmly to Your promises and share that faith joyfully with others. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: When the distress of troubled times disrupts the peace of our lives, we often seek stability in the comforts of life; we find refuge in recreation or solace in shopping! God offers a better branch to pin our hopes of peace on: The Son of David who has come to set things right in our lives once again.

OFFERING PRAYER: We bring these gifts, Lord, not to buy Your favor,
Because we know, in love You sent our Savior;
So now we pray Your blessing on these offerings,
And also for our lives, Your peace in sufferings.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: The things that disrupt our peace are not only nations in anguish and apprehensions of what may come. Our hearts are weighed down with anxieties that we bring upon ourselves by our sinful living. We need something solid to cling to - or some peace-maker to cling to us! Christ Jesus is the strong Branch of David's line, King of God's realm of peace, who has strengthened our troubled hearts and made us blameless and holy by righteous sacrifice.

BONUS: The Branch of David's Royal Tree

The Branch of David's royal tree
Has come to make things right;
He promised peace for you and me
And safety through the night.

God sent His Son, the Prince of Peace,
And now in faith we see,
His arms of love would not release
The Branch on Calv'ry's tree.

When troubles sweep our breath away
This Branch is sure to hold,
And even in the dreadful day
His grace will make us bold.