

Walking in Christ's Light

Daily Prayer Journal

December 29, 2008-January 3, 2009

Growing our souls is a partnership with Christ.

To enable your soul's growth, use this material with Christ as your guide.

Next Week's Sermon

Scripture: Isaiah 60: 1-6 and Matthew 2:1-12

(www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=isaiah+60:1-6)

(www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=matthew+2:1-12)

Theme: A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is primary

Sermon: "What Can I Bring To Christ This Year?"

Question: What will make Christ happy with me?

MONDAY 12-29-08

Read: Isaiah 9:1-7 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=isaiah+9:1-7)

Prayer: (Prayer by Maren C. Tirabassi) "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, O Promised One: Once again we come to this time of Advent and await your presence. Give us patience to seek the meaning of these busy days. Give us the courage to wait in times of pain and trouble. Give us the compassion to wait for one another. Give us the faith to wait for the Messiah when we are threatened by the Herods of this world. Give us the hope to wait for the Savior even when we cannot hear the angels singing. Give us the love that does not wait when it meets Christ in our neighbor. Amen."

Journal Reflection: God's vision of a coming Kingdom moves through the words of the Prophet Isaiah. The people have suffered one disaster after another. They are weary and hopeless. Into their dark despair comes God's message of light and hope. God is at work! God will bring hope! God will come and will transform our planet from a dark, violent place to a heavenly garden of peace. During this last week before Christmas spend time with your family or friends talking about God's vision of peace. Decide what you can do to help God's vision become a reality.

Resolve: I am going to be one of Christ Jesus' peacemakers!

TUESDAY 12-30-08

Read: Isaiah 11:1-9 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=isaiah+11:1-9)

Prayer: (Prayer by Maren C. Tirabassi) "Gracious God, we hear the promise of the coming of Jesus into a manger and into our hearts and homes. Bless our Advent waiting; fill our worship with anticipation of your love; and dedicate us to prepare your way by lifting up the valleys in our lives and making smooth the rough places of others. For we pray in the name of 'Emmanuel---God with us'. Amen."

Journal Reflection: God's vision of a new Kingdom on earth flows out of the Prophet Isaiah once again. The 'fear of the Lord' actually means worshipful awe. The Messiah will be filled with and delight in the majesty and awe of God. The vision tells us that all God's creatures will be who they are created to be while still living under the reign of God's peace. So the serpent will still be the snake, but not attack the child. The lion will be the lion but not attack the sheep. God's miracle of peace will rule! In this final week leading up to Christmas, pray for God's peace to be in your home, with your family, and among your friends. Jesus is the Prince of Peace! Ask Jesus to guide you, direct you, and give you the courage to live God's peace!

Resolve: I am going to live within the circle of God's miracle of peace today.

WEDNESDAY 12-31-08

Read: Psalm 89:1-4 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=psalm+89:1-4)

Prayer: (Prayer by Janet Morley) "God, our hope and our desire, we wait for your coming as a woman longs for the birth, the exile for her home, the lover for the touch of his beloved, and the humble poor for justice. Amen"

Journal Reflection: God's steadfast love endures, endures, and endures. Ponder what that means to be loved by a God who will not give up on you even when you give up on yourself.

Resolve: I put my trust in God and God alone.

THURSDAY 1-1-09

Read: Matthew 1:18-25 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=matthew+1:18-25)

Prayer: (Prayer by the Moravian Brethren) "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, thou dost faithfully fulfill thy promises. We thank thee that thou didst send Thine only begotten son in the fullness of time. With all thy church we celebrate his joyous coming. We glorify thee, our gracious Father, and thy Son, our King from Zion, and the Holy Spirit. Thou, our King, who camest the name of thy Father, we beg thee, enable us to celebrate thy holy Advent in our hearts, with our words, and through our devoted lives. Pour out thy bountiful blessing upon us. Enable us to listen to thy Word with eagerness, to trust it and accept it in faith, so that we may joy in thy Spirit and offer thee adoration. Let us serve thee, the Incarnate God, our Redeemer, in all this time here in thy church now, and then in thy Kingdom for ever. Amen"

Journal Reflection: The Apostle Matthew tells the Christmas story as he was told by the followers of Jesus in Galilee. After all, Matthew was a Galilean who could talk with a number of friends and relatives. Matthew writes this account based on factual data that he collected! We learn that Joseph had a struggle accepting his pregnant fiancé. Wouldn't you? We learn that the angel visited Joseph as well as Mary and that Joseph faithfully followed the angel's directions. Matthew points to a passage in the Prophet Isaiah (7:14) that Joseph and the Galilean Jesus followers used as a key to understand Jesus' miraculous birth. Joseph followed the angel's direction that was directly connected to Holy Scripture. Are you willing to be as faithful a follower of God as Joseph?

Resolve: I will follow God's directions, even when they do not make sense to me.

FRIDAY 1-2-09

Read: Matthew 2:1-18 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=matthew+2:1-18)

Prayer: (Prayer by Ruth C. Duck) "Gentle God, you know that for us, this is a season of hopes and fears. We are caught up in our excitement and plans. We worry whether everything will get done and whether our relationships will blossom, bend, or break in the stress of the season. Slow us down, God, and help us to place our hope in you. Be our calm center, that we may be channels of peace to the people around us; through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen."

Journal Reflection: Matthew tells us about the innocent blood spilt after Jesus' birth. King Herod was fully capable of such genocide if he thought there was a challenge to his power. After all, Herod killed his wife and sons because he was afraid they would seek to overthrow him. This account only underscores the very dangerous task Jesus followers have when they stand up to the current political powers and seek to announce God's reign of peace for all people. When the Prince of Peace was born, violence ensued. How are you making sure that you are on Jesus' side and not that of our violent world?

Resolve: I am committed to being a true follower of Jesus Christ no matter what the cost.

SATURDAY 1-3-09

Read: Luke 2:1-20 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=luke+2:1-20)

Prayer: (Prayer by Walter C. Sutton) "It's Christmas again, Heavenly Father! We've managed to make a mostly pagan holiday of it—a merchandising season that can make or break businesses, a time of reckless spending and thoughtless extravagance—but still, there's no denying how it all began. It started when you showed you love for the world in a special way, through a newborn child, helpless, poor, and threatened by political intrigue. Never mind what we've done to the day—it is still his day! His wisdom still brings newness of life. His faithful love, even at the cost of his own life, still changes hearts and stirs the world. It's Christmas again, Heavenly Father. Thank you! Amen"

Journal Reflection: Dr. Luke wrote his account of Jesus' birth by interviewing key participants including Mother Mary. As you read this story what jumps out at you? Christmas is over for this year. But, the story still can capture your attention. You can still remember all year the amazing, surprising acts of God in coming to earth to redeem us. You can especially maintain a spirit of Christmas thanksgiving all year long. So, today in your family devotional, talk about how you can keep the Christmas spirit alive within your home all year.

Resolve: I will live with a thankful Christmas spirit all year.