UPC Family Daily Devotional

Advent 2021 – Week 1

Nov 28 Sunday Genesis 18:16-33

Abraham know that Sodom’s destruction was not a natural disaster. It was the direct judgment of a holy God on a people who had spurned Him. He know that it was a warning for people of all time that, while God is patient, He will certainly judge all sin because our God is a god of justice. Yet Abraham still pleads with God on their behalf. His motive in this appeal, of course, is to save his nephew Lot from destruction along with Sodom. This is the second time Abraham has risked himself to rescue Lot. Now he comes before the Lord himself with incredible nerve by contending that it would be wrong “to kill the righteous with the wicked(v.25).” Abraham is not trying to shame God into doing the right thing by appealing to his self-respect in this reminder. Rather, he is basing his appeal on the knowledge of God’s nature and one of His characters - His mercy. In addition to the recognition of God’s mercy, we must consider Abraham’s awareness of his own status before God (v.27). This is the kind of language which delights God to hear and honor, for it is the very opposite of the pride and deceit that makes us think we can demand of God what we want and however we want.

Whom have you been lifting up to the Lord in your intercessory prayer as fervently and humbly as Abraham does in today’s scripture?

Nov 29 Monday Acts 3:11-26

The healing of a lame man at the temple gate(3:1-10) provides an example of an apostolic miracle (2:43) and attracts a crowd to hear Peter’s second sermon in the temple area. In Acts, actions often lead to an explanation about what God is doing; word and deed go together. It is also important that we notice how quickly Peter refutes the idea that it was somehow by his power and piety this man was healed. He clearly denies having anything to do with this miracle while addressing that it was all by God and for His glory only. This should remind us of the verses that teach us how God commands us to handle His glory*. I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols*(Isaiah 42:8).

Why is it hard to give God credit for everything, especially when you are the one who works hard for the result?

Nov 30 Tuesday Numbers 24:15-19

Balaam is a true prophet through whom the Lord speaks on a number of occasions, but his heart is wicked, and he is willing to curse God’s people for the financial reward offered by the ungodly king of Moab, Balak. Three times the Lord not only prevents Balaam from cursing Israel but causes him to bless the people with great abundance and with victory over their enemies, which enrages King Balak. Moreover Balaam prophesizes of a great King (*a star shall come out… a sceptor shall rise… (*v.17)) , who would come forth from Jacob, who would conquer Moab and all their enemies - JESUS.

Balaam is a reminder of the fact that God can use any person or any circumstance to accomplish His purposes. It’s usually easy for us to believe this truth when we read about it in the Scripture. However, accepting it is much harder when we confront a difficult person or an especially frustrating situation. Who or what would be at the top of your “trial list” today? Turn your concerns or fears about it into a prayer, asking God for the patience to be faithful while He works out His purpose through your trial.

Dec 1 Wednesday Isaiah 7:1-14

Isaiah is directed by God to stand on a specific spot to deliver His message to King Ahaz. There the prophet informs the King that he has nothing to fear from his enemies that are threatening the city of Jerusalem. Then he calls for attention from not only the king but also his people this time only to prophesize of the birth of their coming Messiah, JESUS CHRIST.

Is there something you have been waiting for? Have you been waiting on God? While we wait, we shall trust that Jesus is our only source of blessing and deliverance.

Dec 2 Thursday Isaiah 9:1-7

The spiritual gloom of 8:22 is dispelled forever by the light of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Jesus rightly deserves the four divine titles Isaiah gives – *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace* (9:6). A “**Counselor”** is one who is able to make wise plans. He is a ruler whose wisdom is beyond merely human capabilities. “**Mighty God”** is a title of the Lord Himself (Deut. 10:17). A“**Father**” here is a benevolent protector, which is the task of the ideal king and is also the way God Himself cares for His people. “**Prince of Peace**” – He is the ruler whose reign will bring about peace because the nations will rely on his just decisions in their disputes.

Which of the four names of Jesus resonates with you most?

Dec 3 Friday Matthew 4:12-17

The region of Zebulun and Naphtali (v.15) had experienced turmoil under Assyrian domination and the Jewish inhabitants had longed for liberation from Gentile rule. They are now the first to see the great light of God’s deliverance in Jesus.

Have you experienced Jesus as *a great light* (v.16) shone on you in the time of darkness?

Dec 4 Saturday Isaiah 11:1-5

Jesus Christ allows the *fear of the Lord* and *righteousness* to guide him. He rules with the absolute integrity. He defends *the poor* and *the needy* according to his *righteousness* and *faithfulness* (v.5).

Jesus is the Messiah, our king. Yet unlike human leaders, he is not deceived by appearances (v.3). Have you experienced his power perfected in your weakness?