UPC Family Daily Devotional

Advent 2021 – Week 3

A group of lit candles

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Dec 12 Sunday Matthew 2:1-12

Matthew highlights God’s sovereign care in this infancy account of Jesus the King. God sees and knows everything. Thus, because of His sovereign nature and amazing love for His children, when He directs our path, we shall trust firmly that He also provides(v.11, the gifts from the magi likely used providentially to support the family in their flight to Egypt) and protects(v.12) us along the journey He puts us through, never forsakes us like sheep without a shepherd.

When have you experienced God who prepared a way ahead and provided before you even asked upon your act of obedience?

Dec 13 Monday Matthew 2:13-23

Where will you flee when danger comes? Where is your shelter in times of trouble? Dangers in our lives can be temptation, addiction, unbelief, suffering and many other things that lure us AWAY from God. Though you might think that God is not doing anything to change your circumstance, trusting that He is our hiding place actually saves us from further troubles. Let us not lean on our own strength to escape but rather seek His protection first and solely. Run to Him.

Are you deeply involved in fellowship with the Lord where you continue asking and receiving His guidance and deliverance? Do you sense that the Lord intervenes in all areas of your life?

Dec 14 Tuesday Galatians 3:1-14

In Galatians chapters 3-5 show Paul’s direct appeals to the Galatians as to why they should resist the seductive teaching of the people troubling them. His main point here is that salvation is not by the law but by grace. Moreover it is through genuine faith that one is counted righteous, which is also taught with the Old Testament example of Abraham in the scripture. Abraham is a living OT prophecy of the gospel: he was not an Israelite but a pagan, yet God justified him by faith. He is the father of God’s people not because he is the biological ancestor of the Jews but because he has a family of spiritual children who follow in his footsteps by believing as he did.

The enemy tries to manipulate our belief by making us think that salvation must take more than just having faith in Jesus. And the author of our salvation calls that “foolish(v.3)”. Our savior was born of a woman and raised by humble, yet God-fearing people. Our savior was placed right among us by the very hand of God only to show us His Immanuel(God with us) love. He went from a village to another to heal, preach and save as many sinner as possible. God’s love, which stands behind His ministry through His son is much more powerful and greater than we can ever imagine. What areas of your life do you think God is particularly trying to guide and bring better understanding during this advent season?

Dec 15 Wednesday Galatians 3:15-25

God was certainly not surprised by the fact that the Israelites were unable to obey the law. In fact, at the end of the giving of the law, Moses foretold that the Israelites would not obey it (Deut. 31:24-29). Then why was the law ever given? In Paul mind, it was given to reveal people’s sinfulness and need for a savior (Rom. 3:20). They needed a sacrificial system to deal temporarily with transgressions. They needed justification that would come only by faith because God knew our effort would never be enough. Our faith in the birth, the death and the resurrection of His own son. That is what Paul means by a new covenant faith in Christ (v.22).

What are we to do with the Law today? Is it some outdated, irrelevant work that we can neglect as we live our modern days? Though the Law should never keep us in bondage, it clearly reveals to our souls daily that we need Christ.

Dec 16 Thursday Galatians 3:26-4:7

In verses 28, Paul’s teaching does not imply that there are no distinction in how these groups should act. He clearly is not advocating the elimination of all distinctions nor the acceptability of same-sex marriage or homosexual relations. Paul rather teaches that old divisions and wrongful attitudes of superiority and inferiority are abolished, “for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. He does not mean to take away the distinction between men and women but says they are “united,” joined together in “one” body, the church. The verse teaches unity within diversity but not sameness.

Paul’s main point is that those who belong to Christ are part of one body, His church. What makes it difficult for a church stay strong and united in Christ?

Dec 17 Friday Matthew 24:1-25

As Jesus departs the temple, the disciples observes the splendor of its buildings constructed by Herod. Knowing what is to happen in the future, Jesus shocks them by revealing that the temple they so admire will be completely destroyed (v.2). This would be the result of Israel’s rejection of her Messiah. His prophecy is fulfilled when the Roman army under Titus destroys Jerusalem and the temple. It serves as a symbol and foreshadowing of the distant event, his second coming. Then he continues on by giving them a lesson on watching, waiting, and being prepared for his return as well as a promise of reward at the time of his return.

How would you prepare yourself for his return?

Dec 18 Saturday Matthew 24:26-35

Jesus moves from describing future events to dealing with the attributes that should characterize his followers as they prepare for the end, knowing that his return is imminent. Jesus attributes divine authority and permanence to his own teaching – it is greater even than “heaven and earth” (v.35).

From Jesus’ words, we see that the authority of God’s words is immeasurable and that no created beings can change His authority. For the same reason, the covenant (terms set by God Himself and Him alone) that He has given to each one of us has the power to sustain and sanctify us till the day the agreement is fulfilled fully. What is the greatest God-given covenant you cling to?