

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 14, 2015

The Rev. Anthony Hita '13, Senior Pastor, Stahlstown United Methodist Charge, Stahlstown, Pa.

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 40

- 1 I waited patiently for the LORD;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
- 2 He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
- 3 He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the LORD.
- 4 Happy are those who make
the LORD their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.
- 5 You have multiplied, O LORD my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.
Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.
- 6 Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering
you have not required.
- 7 Then I said, "Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.
- 8 I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart."
- 9 I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O LORD.
- 10 I have not hidden your saving help within my heart,
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.

- 11 Do not, O LORD, withhold
your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
keep me safe forever.
- 12 For evils have encompassed me
without number;
my iniquities have overtaken me,
until I cannot see;
they are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails me.
- 13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;
O LORD, make haste to help me.
- 14 Let all those be put to shame and confusion
who seek to snatch away my life;
let those be turned back and brought to dishonor
who desire my hurt.
- 15 Let those be appalled because of their shame
who say to me, “Aha, Aha!”
- 16 But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who love your salvation
say continually, “Great is the LORD!”
- 17 As for me, I am poor and needy,
but the Lord takes thought for me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
do not delay, O my God.

DEVOTIONAL

Christmas is a time when we celebrate and remember the deliverance that came in Christ so long ago. But in the midst of the holiday season, it can be easy to forget God is still a God of deliverance and hope. The Psalmist writes of the LORD drawing the writer up from a desolate pit. We might be tempted to stop there; after all, most of us probably recall a time that God has delivered us. But the Psalmist doesn't stop there. They go on to say that they will not hide the news of their deliverance; they will tell others of God's great faithfulness. This Christmas there will be so much to draw our attention. But in the midst of the celebrating, don't forget that this world still has many seeking to be drawn up from deep pits. Don't hide the message of deliverance—proclaim it and live it out for the benefit of others.

PRAYER

Dear Lord of deliverance, open my eyes this season to see those who are in need that I may proclaim your steadfast love and faithfulness in word and in deed, that all who seek You may rejoice and be glad in Your salvation. Amen.

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