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Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Morning Psalms 33; 146

First Reading Isaiah 1:21-31

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Gospel Luke 20:9-18

Evening Psalms 85; 94

1 Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright. 2 Praise the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings. 3 Sing to him a new song; play skilfully on the strings, with loud shouts. 4 For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. 5 He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. 6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth. 7 He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. 9 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. 10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The counsel of the Lord stands for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. 12 Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage. 13 The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all humankind. 14 From where he sits enthroned he watches all the inhabitants of the earth— 15 he who fashions the hearts of them all, and observes all their deeds. 16 A king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. 17 The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save. 18 Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, 19 to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. 20 Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield. 21 Our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. 22 Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

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“...those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love.”

How strange - to hope in what we fear.

We don't like to talk about “fearing” the Lord. Yet, we can only hope in the Lord if the Lord is worth fearing.

A god weaker than our weapons or no stronger than our soldiers is worthless. A god who fears famine or dreads death cannot deliver us. A god we cannot fear is hopeless.

Our hope is in the Lord.

The Lord destroys defenses, mightier than an army; stronger than a warhorse. The Lord defeats our deepest fears, the dread of death and the horror of hunger. The Lord conquers the tangible – soldiers and stallions, and the intangible – fatality and famine. The Lord is to be feared.

This almighty God, with power to destroy and defeat, comes to us... as an infant.

The Lord comes to us not as a soldier on a warhorse, but as our help and shield. God comes to us able to defeat death, able to vanquish famine. God chooses to use this infinite power to deliver us, to keep us, to save us.

God is to be feared. Thus we can hope in God's steadfast love.

Prayer: Lord, We thank you that you are mightier than we are. We thank you that you are stronger than our fears. We thank you that you come to us not as an overpowering enemy, but as our help and our shield. Help us to place our hope in you this Christmas season in particular. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.