

Advent Devotional December 10, 2018

Scripture

Isaiah 5:8-17

- ⁸ Ah, you who join house to house,
 who add field to field,
until there is room for no one but you,
 and you are left to live alone
 in the midst of the land!
- ⁹ The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing:
Surely many houses shall be desolate,
 large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant.
- ¹⁰ For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath,
 and a homer of seed shall yield a mere ephah.
- ¹¹ Ah, you who rise early in the morning
 in pursuit of strong drink,
who linger in the evening
 to be inflamed by wine,
- ¹² whose feasts consist of lyre and harp,
 tambourine and flute and wine,
but who do not regard the deeds of the LORD,
 or see the work of his hands!
- ¹³ Therefore my people go into exile without knowledge;
 their nobles are dying of hunger,
 and their multitude is parched with thirst.
- ¹⁴ Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite
 and opened its mouth beyond measure;
the nobility of Jerusalem and her multitude go down,
 her throng and all who exult in her.
- ¹⁵ People are bowed down, everyone is brought low,
 and the eyes of the haughty are humbled.
- ¹⁶ But the LORD of hosts is exalted by justice,
 and the Holy God shows himself holy by righteousness.
- ¹⁷ Then the lambs shall graze as in their pasture,
fatlings and kids shall feed among the ruins.

Devotional

The Rev. Derek R. Davenport '05/'17, Director, Miller Summer Youth Institute

This passage is not particularly Christmas-y. At least, not at first glance.

So often, when we get ready for Christmas, we want tender moments and sweet babies. We want Jesus to be happy, gentle, and peaceful. We want *Silent Night* and *Away in a Manger* along with hot chocolate and warm blankets.

Those aspects of Christmas are appropriate, but they're just one side of our celebrations. We sometimes forget how radical and revolutionary Christmas really is. This passage from Isaiah reminds us of how shocking God can be. The haughty are humbled and lambs feed among ruins. As strange as these images are, their very strangeness makes them appropriate for Christmas—for the celebration of the infinite born an infant, reality redeemed through resurrection.

As you prepare for Christmas this year, as you hear your favorite songs and see those nativity sets, remember the words of Isaiah. Remember how revolutionary Christmas truly is.

Prayer

God of reversal and resurrection, we thank you for this season. We thank you for the ways you surprise us. We ask you to open our eyes to your work around us where we least expect it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.