

Advent Devotional December 1, 2021

Scripture

Psalm 147:1-11

- ¹ *Praise the Lord!*
How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.
- ² *The Lord builds up Jerusalem;*
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.
- ³ *He heals the brokenhearted,*
and binds up their wounds.
- ⁴ *He determines the number of the stars;*
he gives to all of them their names.
- ⁵ *Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;*
his understanding is beyond measure.
- ⁶ *The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;*
he casts the wicked to the ground.
- ⁷ *Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;*
make melody to our God on the lyre.
- ⁸ *He covers the heavens with clouds,*
prepares rain for the earth,
makes grass grow on the hills.
- ⁹ *He gives to the animals their food,*
and to the young ravens when they cry.
- ¹⁰ *His delight is not in the strength of the horse,*
nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;
- ¹¹ *but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,*
in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Devotional

Brenda Henry '17

During the season of Advent, we sing songs proclaiming God's steadfast love. We sing of the hope and promise of the soon-coming Savior. Our songs often depict a duality: we remember Jesus' birth as the promise given to the Israelites of the coming Messiah, while we also keep in mind that Jesus came and died on the cross, ascended to heaven, and will come again. Thus, we await the second coming with great anticipation. We live in the tension of now and not yet.

So much of our world seems caught between this tension of how we are to be now while we await the future promise of that world to come where all will be well. The psalmist points us to this duality by inviting us to praise the God who heals the broken-hearted and binds up the wounded. The emphasis is on what God is doing now even as we live amid difficulties. The same care that God gives to the animals and to the plants, God gives to us. God tends to the smallest detail. We are precious in the eyes of God.

The psalmist reminds us that the faithful response is to continually praise God. Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving, we are told. And so we do. Assured that God's delight in us is not for our strength or might, but for our hope in God's steadfast love. And so we sing:

*Creator of the stars of night,
Your people's everlasting light*

*O Christ, redeemer of us all
We pray you hear us when we call*

*When this old world drew on toward night,
You came; but not in splendor bright
Not as a monarch, but the child
Of Mary blessed mother child*

*At your great name, O Jesus, now
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow
All things on earth with one accord
Like those in heav'n shall call you Lord*

*Come in your holy might we pray
Redeem us for eternal day
Defend us while we dwell below
From all assaults of our dread foe*

*To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might and glory be
From age to age eternally. Amen.
(from "Creator of the Stars of Night")*

What is your favorite Advent song? How does it draw you closer to God's presence?

Prayer

Loving Creator God, how wonderful it is to sing praises to you. You came as a child, walked this earth in human form, and died to redeem us, all out of love for us—your creation. As we await your return, help us to do as you did and care for the wounded and broken-hearted, share food with the hungry, and be good stewards of your creation. In Jesus' name, Amen.