

## Advent Devotional December 7, 2022

### Scripture

Psalm 53

- 1 Fools say in their hearts, "There is no God."  
They are corrupt; they commit abominable acts;  
there is no one who does good.
- 2 God looks down from heaven on humankind  
to see if there are any who are wise,  
who seek after God.
- 3 They have all fallen away; they are all alike perverse;  
there is no one who does good,  
no, not one.
- 4 Have they no knowledge, those evildoers,  
who eat up my people as they eat bread  
and do not call upon God?
- 5 There they shall be in great terror,  
in terror such as has not been.  
For God will scatter the bones of the ungodly;  
they will be put to shame, for God has rejected them.
- 6 O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion!  
When God restores the fortunes of his people,  
Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

### Devotional

#### Mat Meyer, MDiv student

Reading Psalm 53, I can't help but remember a certain orange VHS tape we owned—*Rugrats: The Santa Experience*. In it, Angelica tricks Phil and Lil into trading her their favorite toys for gifts for one another. Phil gives Angelica his Reptar doll for a box of crayons, and Lil her coloring book for a Reptar space helmet. When Angelica learns that Santa gives lumps of coal to bad kids, she tries to make things right. Angelica returns their toys. On Christmas morning, Angelica receives the Cynthia deluxe playhouse she wanted. But as she looks closely, Angelica spies a small piece of coal in the playhouse garage.

It's more than she deserves.

*There is no one who does good, no not one.*

Psalm 53 offers a scathing indictment of humanity in its sinful condition. Much like how Santa sees you when you're sleeping and knows when you're awake, God looks down from heaven. And according to the psalmist, what God sees is appalling—abominable acts, perversity, devouring the poor! The psalmist promises terror, scattered bones, shame, and rejection.

Yet for all these terrifying words, the psalm ends with words of *longing* and of *hope*—deliverance from Zion. Rejoicing for Jacob. Gladness for Israel.

In Advent we look toward deliverance with the same longing and hope of the psalmist. As we anticipate Christ's return, we rejoice in God's promises. For Christ comes to set us free from our bondage to this sinful condition.

It's more than we deserve. Rejoice.

**Prayer**

Merciful God, we confess that we do not seek after you, yet we long for your undeserved grace. Deliver us, O Lord, from our abominable acts, from our perversity, and from our devouring the poor. Deliver us, O Lord, that like Jacob we may rejoice and that like Israel we may be glad; through Christ our Lord. Amen.