

Lent Devotional April 4, 2019

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 147:12-20

- ¹² Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!
- ¹³ For he strengthens the bars of your gates;
he blesses your children within you.
- ¹⁴ He grants peace within your borders;
he fills you with the finest of wheat.
- ¹⁵ He sends out his command to the earth;
his word runs swiftly.
- ¹⁶ He gives snow like wool;
he scatters frost like ashes.
- ¹⁷ He hurls down hail like crumbs—
who can stand before his cold?
- ¹⁸ He sends out his word, and melts them;
he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.
- ¹⁹ He declares his word to Jacob,
his statutes and ordinances to Israel.
- ²⁰ He has not dealt thus with any other nation;
they do not know his ordinances.
- Praise the LORD!

DEVOTIONAL

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Often we Christians sit in visioning sessions for our congregations and brainstorm about what we can offer people to bring them into our church building—and then, what will make them want to come back. We strategize. We offer child care. We offer cry rooms. We plan out children's church and youth programming. We rehearse praise bands and choirs. Surely people will want to worship here. And in doing so, we sometimes program over the one thing that we can offer that will truly make a difference: God.

God is so powerful and merciful that "He can give snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes" (v. 16). Yet he can also "grant peace within your borders" (v. 14). Nothing in this world can compare to the wonder of the One True God, who comes to us in Triune form. The loving grace of the Father brings God to us as our Creator and Provider. God comes to us incarnate as the Christ to deliver us from sin and death. The wondrous Spirit engulfs us to guide us through the turmoil and blessings of this world and lead us into the next.

In our congregations we can offer a time of worshiping the Lord. We can offer the Scriptures for a better understanding of God. And we can come alongside each other in fellowship and deepen our relationships with God together. But it is the Lord God Almighty who opens the hearts of those who are seeking him. The amazing power and majesty of God are all that is needed for our life eternal. Praise the Lord!

PRAYER

You strengthen us and bless us, O Lord, because of Your endless love for us. This love is too great for us to comprehend, but we thank You for it and for the grace You shower upon us. How wonderful You are. You care for us. You grant us Your peace. When we falter, Lord, You pick us up. When we stray, You lead us home. We long to be in Your presence and ask for Your blessings of strength and comfort, that we may shine Your Light into the world. We love You, Lord, and praise your Name. Amen.