

Tuesdays are important corporate days of Prayer and Fasting for the Kansas City Underground as we pray along with our family and friends throughout the world.

For many in Jesus' Church during December, we are celebrating that we have entered the season of Advent. And as one bishop recently said, "For Christians, Advent is not meant to be a time of passive waiting, but rather of hopeful preparation for the coming of the Lord." Advent, which in its Latin origins means "(A) coming," helps orient us to begin a new year with anticipation for what only God can do rather than with making resolutions for what we can do. With people who have walked with Jesus around the world for centuries, the Christian calendar begins anew.

And what an invitation this is for us today. As the days get shorter, colder, and darker, we dare to look at a year that did not go according to our plans and entrust God to redeem our past. We also look to the future, daring to hope that grace will win and the gift of salvation is ours to receive freely in Christ despite what we have done and what we have not done. And we also dare to be present, no matter how hard and heavy this moment is, because we trust Immanuel, God with us, is in it.

Jesus' Church during medieval times may have something to teach us here. Renowned Advent author and preacher Fleming Rutledge writes: "(Jesus') medieval Church designed the four Sundays of Advent around the themes of the four last things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell ...That was no accident. The idea was to show how the light of the birth of Christ appeared against a backdrop of darkness, depravity, and despair." Amen to that. Joy to the world. Our Lord is come. Let's receive such a willing and mighty King who is, for us, the Light in our darkness.

There's a reason why people who follow Jesus around the world are looking at Psalm 80 to orient them again to His Advent this week. As we join with them, look for the God who came to shine on us so that we may be saved.

Theme:

The God Who Comes to Shine on Us, Restore Us, and Save Us

Today's scriptures: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, NIV

Read: Psalm 80:1-3

*Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit **enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth** before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Awaken Your might; come and save us. Restore us, **O God; make Your face shine on us, that we may be saved.***

Reflect: What is your cry in light of last year? For the year ahead? Are you looking to the heavens for salvation?

Pray:

Cry out to the infinite God who shines with the angels. Cry out to the the intimate God shines in the face of baby Jesus.

Read: Psalm 80:4-6

How long, LORD God Almighty, will Your anger smolder against the prayers of Your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; You have made them drink tears by the bowlful. You have made us an object of derision to our neighbors, and our enemies mock us.

Reflect:

What was dark, depraved, and/or full of despair this past year? What enemies mocked your tears?

Pray:

Make time to acknowledge the darkness. Give God your questions. Ask Him to change derision into delight.

Read: Psalm 80:7

Restore us, God Almighty; make Your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

Reflect:

When God has met with you this past year, what did He provide in order to restore you then?

Pray:

Ask God to restore you again. He is the God who comes. Pray to see His restorative work in you afresh.

Read: Psalm 80:17-19

Let Your hand rest on the man at Your right hand, the son of man You have raised up for Yourself. Then we will not turn away from You; revive us, and we will call on Your name. Restore us, LORD God Almighty; make Your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

Reflect:

How is the Son of Man being raised up before you? What do you need to turn to Him for right now?

Pray:

Pray to receive Christ during Advent in all the hidden, surprising, and joyful ways He wants to come meet you during this beginning of the Christian calendar. His salvation is behind you and ahead of you and ever available to you right now, no matter how dark the night or cold your heart. Be warmed to His presence now.