

Sunday, December 10, 2023, 9:00am
Second Sunday in Advent



Bright Light of Bethlehem...Many Lights are Brighter—Together

It's very bright in the middle of the day, but no matter how bright the day is, night eventually comes and the light fades away.

However, it's possible, to live our entire lives in the light of the sun, if we were to keep journeying westward fast enough to keep up with the sun. But because we don't make that journey west, the day fades into night, light changes to darkness.

The journey would be too difficult. It would cost too much. It would be too tiring. It's easier to be satisfied with where we are. That's not a bad analogy for faith.

Walking in the light of Jesus, continually, is a difficult journey. It carries with it certain costs. It can, at times, be tiring and discouraging. But it has one great reward, it's a journey that we take with Jesus constantly at our side, urging us on, lifting us and carrying us when we weary, providing for us when we think we just can't give any more.

Prelude

#344, On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

- 1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry Announces that the Lord is nigh; Awake and hearken, for he brings Glad tidings of the King of kings!**
- 2 Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin; Make straight the way for God within, And let us all our hearts prepare For Christ to come and enter there.**
- 3 We hail Thee as our Savior, Lord, Our refuge and our great reward; Without Thy grace we waste away Like flow'rs that wither and decay.**
- 4 Lay on the sick Thy healing hand And make the fallen strong to stand; Show us the glory of Thy face Till beauty springs in ev'ry place.**
- 5 All praise, eternal Son, to Thee Whose advent sets Thy people free, Whom with the Father we adore And Holy Spirit evermore.**

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite

Text: Public domain

L: O Lord, open my lips,

C: and my mouth will declare Your praise.

L: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

C: make haste to help me, O Lord.

C: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Praise to You, O Christ, King who comes to save us.

L: Behold, the Lord comes to save us.

C: O come, let us worship Him.

VENITE LSB 220

C: O come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving, let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise.

For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. The deep places of the earth are in His hand; the strength of the hills is His also.

The sea is His, for He made it, and His hand formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.

For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L: Behold, the Lord comes to save us.

C: O come, let us worship Him.

P: The Lord be with You,

C: And also with you.

P: Together, we pray,

C: Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Children's Time

Isaiah 40:1–11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and His arm rules for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him. He will tend His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs in His arms; He will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us. **C: Thanks be to God.**

When Will He Come* *Voice Choir

Romans 15:4–7 [Sermon Text]

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 1st Chapter

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send My messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight,'" John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes He who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

#515, Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

- 1 Rejoice, rejoice, believers, And let your lights appear; The evening is advancing,
And darker night is near. The Bridegroom is arising And soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; At midnight comes the cry.**
- 2 The watchers on the mountain Proclaim the Bridegroom near; Go forth as He
approaches With alleluias clear. The marriage feast is waiting; The gates wide open
stand. Arise, O heirs of glory; The Bridegroom is at hand.**
- 3 The saints, who here in patience Their cross and suff'rings bore, Shall live and reign
forever When sorrow is no more. Around the throne of glory The Lamb they shall
behold; In triumph cast before Him Their diadems of gold.**
- 4 Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear; Arise, O Sun so longed for,
O'er this benighted sphere. With hearts and hands uplifted, We plead, O Lord, to
see The day of earth's redemption That sets Your people free!**

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907, alt.
Text: Public domain

The Sermon

Many Lights are Brighter—Together

TE DEUM LSB 223

C: We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord. All the earth now worships You, the Father everlasting. To You all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the pow'rs therein. To You cherubim and seraphim continually do cry:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Your glory. The glorious company of the apostles praise You. The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise You.

The noble army of martyrs praise You. The holy Church throughout all the world does acknowledge You: The Father of an infinite majesty; Your adorable, true, and only Son; also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

You are the king of glory, O Christ; You are the everlasting Son of the Father.

When You took upon Yourself to deliver man, You humbled Yourself to be born of a virgin. When You had overcome the sharpness of death, You opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe that You will come to be our judge.

We therefore pray You to help Your servants, whom You have redeemed with Your precious blood. Make them to be numbered with Your saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your heritage. Govern them and lift them up forever. Day by day we magnify You. And we worship Your name forever and ever.

Grant, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin. O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us. O Lord, let Your mercy be upon us, as our trust is in You. O Lord, in You have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

The Gathering of our Gifts and Tithes

The Prayers of His Children

P: Lord, in Your mercy. C: Hear our prayer.

P: ...as He taught us to pray,

C: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

P: O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, You have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

God's Benediction

#917, Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise

**1 Savior, again to Thy dear name we raise With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
Once more we bless Thee ere our worship cease, Then, lowly bending, wait Thy word of peace.**

**2 Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way; With Thee began, with Thee shall end,
the day. Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame, That in this house have called upon Thy name.**

**3 Grant us Thy peace, Lord, through the coming night; Turn Thou for us its darkness
into light. From harm and danger keep Thy children free; For dark and light are both alike to Thee.**

**4 Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life, Our balm in sorrow and our stay in
strife; Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.**