

GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE**PSALM 80:1-7 (MESSAGE) // 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9 (NLT)****MONDAY 12/4/23**

Psalm 80:1-7/// 1-2 Listen, Shepherd, Israel's Shepherd- GET all your Joseph sheep together. Throw beams of light from your dazzling throne. So Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh can see where they're going.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9/// 1 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes. (Sos-th-enes)

REFLECTION St. Paul is preparing the people of Corinth to receive and affirm the gospel doctrine. So he begins by saying he has the authority and favor of God to teach it. It is by the will of Christ, St. Paul has secured the position of apostle. In order to be effective agents of God, we too, should be like Paul, showing a special interest in others and offering God's grace. One of the reasons St. Paul is so effective as a minister is his faithful desire to see people filled with joy as they come into the presence of God. Like St. Paul, we have been invited by God to be "set apart" from the pagans of the world; To offer them freely the merciful love of God. This year at Christmas, accept your role as ambassadors for the baby Jesus' birth, who is our Savior. 2 Corinthians 5:19 reads, "For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. (NLT)"

The Advent season has always been an excellent time to witness to the power of God's Son. Therefore, be of good cheer and offer the joy of God in your cards and notes you send to friends and family. John 15:14-17 says, "14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. 16 You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other. (NLT)"

PRAYER Thank you Lord Jesus for opening my ears so I may hear the glorious words about our Father in Heaven. As a Shepherd in our flock please let the light of your love shine through me. In Jesus Name, Amen.

TUESDAY 12/5/23

Psalm 80:1-7/// 2-3 Get out of bed—you've slept long enough! Come on the run before it's too late. 3 God, come back! Smile your blessing smile: That will be our salvation.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9/// 2 I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

REFLECTION Every Christmas we see an attempt by our society to crush the gospel with a heavy weight of darkness. Be of good cheer, it is impossible for the light of Christ not to shine because it shines in us. St. Paul is not trying to flatter the Corinthians, ("his holy people") but is reminding them they are under the weight of the Holy Spirit. So let us hold fast to the true gospel even when there are others who are trying to pollute it. Acts 18:9-10 reads, "And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."(ESV) Our voices of truth are powerful among the people in this world. A multitude of ungodly people will always attempt to corrupt the reason for Christmas. Nevertheless, each of us as Christians represents the image of Christ in many ways. This Advent season, let us be free from every wrinkle and stain caused by sin. Those of us who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus are rightly called saints. We show our love for God in this life by showing ourselves to be forgiving, compassionate and merciful. Everyone who is in Christ is a beacon to the pagan world showing we are sanctified in Christ. All our holiness flows from the fountain of divine election. It was all confirmed by the birth of our Savior.

PRAYER Heavenly Father I have been way too shy about telling others about the meaning of your Son's birth. Bless me this holy season to remind people of the true message of Christmas. In Jesus Name, Amen.

WEDNESDAY 12/6/23

Psalm 80:1-7/// 4-6 God, God-of-the-Angel-Armies, how long will you smolder like a sleeping volcano while your people call for fire and brimstone?

1 Corinthians :1-9///3 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. 4 I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus.

REFLECTION The season of Christmas is the opportunity to offer peace and grace to others. These types of gifts are priceless. These gifts are of God. St. Paul is now comforting our minds so we might use our gifts to change our behavior. “I thank God for you,” is a joy St Paul expresses and declares; how greatly pleased he is that we belong to Christ. We are the fruits of God’s love. So now, let us not be foolish by using God’s most excellent gifts for corrupt purposes and our own self ambitions. Our Father’s gift of the Spirit is given to each of us to be used to teach

others about the good news of Jesus. The Word of God teaches us we are rich in Christ’s Spirit, since as Christians we are very valuable to God. Take some time this Christmas to embrace just how enriched our lives are by the birth of the baby Jesus.

PRAYER Dear Lord thank you for your gift; may I not let it sit in a corner under the tree, left unopened. You’ve taught me to share you with others and I thank you. In Jesus Name, Amen.



THURSDAY 12/7/23

Psalm 80:1-7/// 4-6 You put us on a diet of tears, bucket after bucket of salty tears to drink. You make us look ridiculous to our friends; our enemies poke fun day after day.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9/// 5 Through him, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge. 6 This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true.

REFLECTION Each Christmas people participate in a celebration that gives clear evidence of God’s truth. The good news of the baby Jesus is sealed in the hearts and minds of millions of people. Let us bring forward this message by writing out Christmas cards that express this meaning. As we decorate our trees tell the story of a “Light” that has come into the world to chase away the evil. Confirm in your own heart you, too, have the gift of new life. These activities are a result of the Holy Spirit helping us to embrace the miracle birth of Christ. The promise of God’s redemption is being visually seen and verbally confirmed as we celebrate Christmas. John 3:31-36 reads, “He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. 32 “He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! 33 Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. 34 For he is sent by God. He speaks God’s words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands.” (NLT)

PRAYER Lord Jesus lift up my spirit this Christmas so I may not feel alone and sad. May I look outside myself to share this season with others who feel alone and sad. Help me to embrace the power of your Spirit upon me as I participate in the celebration of securing eternal life. In Jesus Name, Amen.

FRIDAY 12/8/23

Psalm 80:1-7/// 7 God-of-the-Angel-Armies, come back! Smile your blessing smile: That will be our salvation.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9/// 7 Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION The giving and the receiving of gifts at Christmas is a sure and certain reflection of the love we share with others. Shopping to find that special gift is an act of giving joy to those we love. In the same manner let us use our spiritual gifts to guide others to seek a new life in our Savior. Colossians 2:2 reads, “I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God’s mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. 3 In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”(NLT) God gives this knowledge to help us accept our salvation. Let us always be hungry and thirsty for this “knowledge”. Let us embrace the cause of Christ this holy season by being a blessing. Matthew 5:6-9 says “God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied. 7 God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God. 9 God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.” (NLT)

PRAYER God you are the creator of an army of angels to protect us and guide us. Blessed are you for you sent us an angel to announce the coming of your Son, the Savior of the world. Bless me in this special time of the year. In Jesus Name, Amen.


SATURDAY 12/9/23

Psalm 80:18 Then take the hand of your once-favorite child, the child you raised to adulthood. We will never turn our back on you; breathe life into our lungs so we can shout your name!

1 Corinthians 1:1-9/// 8 He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. 9 God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION The Advent season is a time for us to offer the blessing of Christ with those we live. The blessing we have received is more than we could have ever imagined. God “has invited you into a partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”. That is a powerful statement and it ought to send shivers up and down your spine. No other religion on the planet would dare make this claim. The fact is, our confession and public acknowledgment that the baby Jesus is the Son of God is a visible sign of our election. The effectiveness and fruitfulness of our faith is a result of the Lord’s word taking root in us. From the first time our hearts were raised up to heaven by the Spirit we became adopted and inherited eternal life. What a gift! But there is more. Hebrew 10:12 says, “But our High Priest (Christ) offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand.” Hebrews 10:16-18 reads, “This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” 17 Then he said, “I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.” 18 And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.” (NLT) The gift of Christ is the greatest gift of all.

PRAYER Lord Jesus give me a heart and mind this holy season to be of great joy. Help me to share with others the reason we celebrate Christmas. In Jesus Name, Amen



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