

Advent Two
Year of the Lord 2021

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
“Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to Thee!”**

Luke 3:1-14 *Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

**And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?”
And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.”
Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?”
And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”**

In the Name of Jesus:

This is just sad. *These* are the *works befitting repentance*? ‘You have two shirts; the next man has none—sooooo?’ ‘You have food; the next man has none—sooooo?’ ‘You can shake down the next man; you know how to grumble, daily and much. Stop it!’

How, my dear ones, will that move the ax-man to lift up his ax lying against a tree doomed to be cut out from the roots, and move on to another? *How* will these *simplest* of all deeds make a useless tree fruitful and living and worth keeping alive: sharing, caring, playing nice with our friends.....?

Senior moments already! I almost missed it!

Luke 9: ⁴⁶ An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷ But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side ⁴⁸ and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.” ¹

Luke 18: ¹⁵ Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁷ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” ²

And right after: ¹⁸ And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁹ And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ²⁰ You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’ ” ²¹ And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.” ²² When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²³ But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. ²⁴ Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶ Those who heard it said, “Then

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 9:46–48). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 18:15–17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

who can be saved?”²⁷ But he said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”³

‘What Child is this who, laid to rest on Mary’s lap, is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?’

‘Nails, spear, shall pierce Him through; the cross be born for me, for you. Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Mary.’

Let me share this revelation from the Lord. When God closes my mouth for good and you need another Sunday morning mouth, find one who begged and begged a girl to marry him; a girl who teaches kindergarten. Then your new Reverend Mouth will be able to understand the Gospel.

These works of repentance seem so sad to me, because I am too growed-up, and always on the brink of turning Pharisee and Sadducee, **too** earnest for the common man, **too** sophisticated for the common man, for such children.

John the Baptist had no other intended audience...**than*...*children*!* Those who have hope of being rescued from the wrath that is to come.

Their hope—every child’s hope—is that there remains love **beyond** time-out on the steps. The hope of the crowds John calls a ‘nest of serpents’ is that there is something real, lasting, **beyond** what they deserve. Our hope—if we have any at all, my dear ones—is that we may have confidence in something that is **outside** of **this**

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 18:18–27). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

question, the *only* question frightened children learn to ask: ‘I don’t want to get in trouble! What *must* I do?’

Christ is that faith; Jesus is that hope; Mary’s Child is that love. Beyond the tedium of teaching, daily and much, *endlessly*: ‘Are we being good friends to our friends?’ ‘How do we share?’ ‘Remember we’re here to be kind to each other.’

John’s voice of wrath and cutting and burning scare me. *Your* Voice—Pastor Mouth—was not sent here from eternity, by your God, to scare you. I *know* how to plead with you to care and share and be kind. But these things are *best* learned from those qualified to teach them: parents, teachers, state troopers, judges, juries, jailers, executioners, and all such dear angels.

This angel has one job: to tell you never to despair! The day will come! The day you will indeed love God with all that’s in you, trust in Him, live from His bounty! The day will come when *we* will love the next man as sincerely as we are in love with our own, precious selves!

In fact, that day has come! For *He* has come, That Child: the One set for the rising and falling of many in Israel and in all nations. Kindness Incarnate! Heaven Caring and Sharing beyond any man’s *dream*! A Child so unlike any other, that this world *had* to grind Him away in the cruelest manner.

From which He rose; and now live and reigns: to tell those baptized *by* Him, *with* Him, *under* Him, that unkind yesterday is yesterday and over. And that beyond *our* uncaring hearts, non-sharing hands, there remain faith, hope, love that do not fail.

It remains *today*, with us. His Body, His Blood, in, with, under Bread and Wine, that a child declared at the communion rail last week, ‘*I* want some of *that*!’

Will he grow *out* of that, as nearly every other child who has knelt here during the thirty year tenure of this mouth? Lord, have mercy.

Leave the past with the devil and the future in the hands of God. And today: eat and drink gifts that do *not* answer the question, ‘What must *we* do to take care of ourselves, as *always*?!’

No. Joy to the world! *Here* is what *He* has done, and what *He* does still! In the Name of Jesus.