

“STEWARDSHIP/WITNESS SENTENCES”

DECEMBER 2015

DECEMBER 6 - Advent II

Luke 3:4 ESV *As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.’”* God makes long range plans: Isaiah lived more than seven hundred years before St. John the Baptist preached by the Jordan River. Obviously God sees farther into the future than we do! That’s yet another reason to trust Him when it comes to how He tells us to live our lives: He knows what’s coming and we don’t.

Witness: Definitions of the word “faith” by an 8th grade confirmation class:

“Trusting in God’s plan when my plans are shattered.”

“Trusting in God to life me up when I am down.”

“When I have no answer to my problems I wait on God to give me an answer.”

“Stop worrying, leave the future to God because He is already there.”

DECEMBER 13 – Advent III

Philippians 4:5-6 ESV *“The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”* Wouldn’t you like to be free from worry and anxiety? Isn’t it worry and anxiety that often keep us from living the generous life God has called us to? St. Paul contrasts anxiety with prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving in making our request known to God. In other word, when you are tempted to anxiety and worry: pray to the Lord with a thankful heart and pour out your supplications before Him.

Witness: Jesus came to be the light of the world; when we share His love, we are letting His light shine through us.

DECEMBER 20 – Advent IV

Luke 1:45 ESV *“And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”* The always fulfills what He promises. We can be certain of that, and He has proven it over and over again. This faith in the Lord’s own faithfulness is what gives us the courage to follow the Lord’s commands in the face of the world’s anger and resistance: just as it gave Mary the courage to carry on in her seemingly embarrassed circumstances.

Witness: Jesus came not on a throne; but in a manger. He did not live like a king; but as a servant. He didn’t give a little; He gave us His all!

DECEMBER 24 - Christmas Eve

Luke 2:11 ESV *“For unto us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord.”* We give gifts at Christmastime because God gave the Gift at Christmas. That’s how it always works: God acts, and we imitate. That’s what it means to grow in faith – to grow more into the image of God in what we think, say, and do.

DECEMBER 25 – Christmas Day

John 1:12 ESV *“But to all who did receive Him, who believed His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”* In the beginning we were made in God’s image. And Adam and Eve sinned and the image was tarnished, in some ways it was even lost. But Christ has come to restore us, to make us God’s children again, to restore the image of God within us. The Christian life is a life of growing into that image, of struggling against sin and striving to imitate our Lord in His mercy, generosity, love, faithfulness, and kindness.

DECEMBER 27 – Christmas I

Luke 2:38 *“And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of Him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.”* Notice here how giving thanks to God leads to good works (speaking about Jesus, in this case). Thankfulness toward God for all He has done for us is the foundation of a Christian life lived in godliness. For if we know all that the Lord has done for us, how can we not strive to honor Him with what we think, say, and do?

Witness: At Christmas God said “I love you” in a very real and personal way as He sent His only-begotten son into our world to save us from our sin and make us heirs of everlasting life. God’s love compels us to use our gifts and resources to share His love for all sinners.

DECEMBER 31 – New Year’s Eve & January 1, New Year’s Day

Luke 2:21 ESV *“And at the end of eight days, when He was circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”* So how was your 2015? What are you looking forward to (with either joy or dread) in 2016? No matter our joys or sorrows this is certain: last year and next year belong to Jesus. And His very Name is a comfort to us for He is called Jesus because He will save His people from their sins as the angel said. As you begin a new year, rest in that knowledge.