



Advent 3

Advent Candle of Joy

Open Your Heart - Feel

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Preaching**

December 13, 2020

First Reading ~ Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of YHWH is upon me,
for YHWH has anointed me:
God has sent me to bring good news
to those who are poor and oppressed;
to heal and bind up the wounds of the broken hearted;
to proclaim release from confinement and condemnation
to those held captive
and liberation to those in prison;
to proclaim the year of God's favor,
and the day of God's vindication;
to comfort all who mourn,
to provide for those who grieve in Zion-
to give them a turban instead of dust on their heads,
the oil of gladness instead of tears,
a garment expressive of praise instead of a disheartened spirit.
They will be called the trees of integrity,
strong and magnificent,
planted by YHWH to display God's glory.
They will build up the ancient ruins,
and raise up the former devastations;
they will repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

“For I, YHWH, love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
So I will faithfully compensate you,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with you.
Your descendants will be renowned among the nations;
and your offspring among the people;
all who see you will acknowledge
that you are a people blessed by YHWH.”

I will joyfully exalt in YHWH,
my whole being shall exalt in my God
who is the joy of my soul!
My God clothed me with a robe of deliverance
and wrapped me in a mantle of justice,
as the betrothed dress themselves with garlands
and their beloved adorn themselves with jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Second Reading ~ *adapted from Howard Thurman in “Meditations of the Heart”*

How wonderful it is to be able to feel things deeply!
The sheer delight of fresh air when you have been indoors all day;
The never ending wonder of sunrise and sunset;
The sound of wind through the trees and the utter wetness of the rain;
The excitement of finding something that was lost and is found:
My fountain pen,
A beautiful word forgotten,
The return of an old book,
The reconciliation after estrangement,
The first step after months of illness...
How joyful! How wonderful!