

**Bible Study**  
**Advent 2, Year C**  
**December 6, 2015**

**(RCL) Baruch 5:1-9; Canticle 16; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6**

**Baruch 5:1-9**

Baruch paints quite a picture of what can be for Jerusalem. She can put aside her sorrow and affliction and see her children gathered from the ends of the earth, remembered before God. With the days of sorrow and affliction far behind, God's chosen people reap all sorts of benefits. The ground is made level so that they can walk safely with God; trees have sheltered them from the sun. It's not clear whether this is expected to happen now for Jerusalem and Israel or if this is simply a promise of distant things to come. What is clear, however, is the source of all this goodness. Baruch says time and again that this is all from God and in God's glory.

- During the season of Advent, what is it that we anticipate from God?
- What are the ways we respond to blessings from God which make our lives easier?

**Canticle 16**

With his tongue newly loosened at his agreement to name his son John, Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit and breaks into prophetic song. In it he foretells the coming of the Messiah and the fulfillment of God's promises. The people will be saved from their enemies and set free to serve God. Zechariah recognizes that his son, John the Baptist, will pass on this knowledge to the people of God. He will let them know that their sins are forgiven and that their lives, once dark, will show forth with God's light. Zechariah speaks aloud the prophecy of God, but he does so by observing the ways in which God is working miraculously in his own life: with the birth of his son and the coming of the Messiah.

- What are the ways in which God is working in your life today?
- What promises do you think God is working to bring to fullness?

**Philippians 1:3-11**

Paul gives thanks for the community of faith and for their fellowship in the Gospel. He prays joyfully, because of their communion, their participation, in the Good News. He goes on to say that his prayer is that their love will overflow or abound. But he doesn't stop with love. As admirable as love may be, his prayer is that their love will lead to "knowledge and full insight." Their love will help them discern what is right, so that they can produce "the harvest of righteousness" which comes through Christ.

- What are the actions that come as a result of love for God or love for neighbor?
- What knowledge, insight, or discernment have you found or might you be able to find as a result of abundant love?

**Luke 3:1-6**

In Luke's introduction of John the Baptist he connects pieces of prophecy to the actions of John in "proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." The prophecy is fulfilled

only because of John's actions in baptism and preaching repentance. For Luke, preparing the way of the Lord begins first and foremost with an acknowledgment of the ways in which the people have fallen short of the glory of God. All flesh being able to see the salvation of God starts with the recognition that they hadn't been looking to God in the first place.

- What are the sins for which we need to repent in order to make the path back to God straight?
- How can repentance and the knowledge that we are forgiven through Christ help us to see God more clearly?

*Written by Ian Lasch*

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