

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

People: Heavenly Father, we long to have faith like Mary. You announced that she would be the mother of our Savior and she was filled with awe. She was amazed and humbled by your attention, and she responded with faith and trust. Forgive us for our weak faith. We are so often rebellious children who resist your guidance and do not fully trust in your love. Forgive us for shallow faith and failure to trust. Forgive us for failing to put into action the love which you have first shown us. Renew us and lead us now by your Holy Spirit. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Readings December 13, 2009

Hosea 11:1-4, 7-9

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me.
They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images.
It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms;
but they did not realize it was I who healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love;
I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them.
My people are determined to turn from me.
Even if they call to the Most High, he will by no means exalt them.
How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim?
My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.
I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim.
For I am God, and not man—the Holy One among you.
I will not come in wrath.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Galatians 3:23-4:7

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Luke 1:26-37

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Sermon Outline • December 13, 2009
"Love Came Down" • "Everlasting Father"
Isaiah 9:6; Galatians 3:23 - 4:7

Introduction: "An Adoption Journey..."

Love Came Down when God adopted us as His children.

1. The Everlasting Father _____.

"But you are our Father... you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name." Isaiah 63:16

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." Ps 139:13

- You were ALWAYS part of God's plan.

2. The Everlasting Father _____.

The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." Jeremiah 31:3

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." Luke 15:20

"My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. " John 10:29

- And you are always welcome home.

3. The Everlasting Father _____.

"Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir." Galatians 4:6-7

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ..." Romans 8:16-17

- An inheritance that will never fade.

Answers to Sermon Outline: knew you before you were born, will never stop loving you, makes all His children heirs

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

People: And the people took the blessing and held it in their hearts.

Leader: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

