

Whispers of the Spirit



Meditations for December 5th to December 11th

Whispers of the Spirit is a ministry of Deacon Carolyn Quinnell and friends.
This week's selections have been written by Deacon Carolyn.

Sunday, December 5th Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4 /
Canticle 4 or 16 / Philippians 1:3-11 / Luke 3:1-6

Luke 3:1-2 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

According to the notes I have with an on-line NIV Cultural Studies Bible, scholars often date the time specified in this verse to between September of AD 27 and October of AD 28. So, why is this important? Because it places John the Baptist, as well as Jesus, at a fixed point in history. Rather than a vague, "Once upon a time..." we have a starting point around which we can point to and say, "This is when God did something new with His creation." It's not a fairy tale, nor is it folk lore. Jesus coming into our world is an actual event in history that touches our lives to this day. May you know His touch this day. Alleluia!

Thank you, Jesus, for your presence among us. Amen.

Monday, December 6th Amos 7:1-9 / Psalm 25 / Revelation 1:1-8 /
Matthew 22:23-33

Matthew 22:31-32 "And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' He is God not of the dead, but of the living."

I knew a woman who, for most of her life, believed that when a person dies, that's it. There is nothing else. All memory is erased. She was taught this at a young age and therefore grew up fearing death. Yes, she was a churchgoer, but somehow, she missed the

teaching on life after death. When she grew old and was close to death, she heard for the first time that she would be greeted in heaven by Jesus himself, and that those whom she loved that had gone on before her would also be there. What welcome news that was. After she died, one Sunday as I was serving at the altar, I looked at the cross on the back wall and caught a brief glimpse of the woman and her loved ones smiling at me. I knew without a doubt she had made it home to the Lord.

Thank you, Jesus, for showing us the way to you. Amen.

Tuesday, December 7th Amos 7:10-17 / Psalm 26, 28 /
Revelation 1:9-16 / Matthew 22:34-46

Psalm 28:2 *Hear the voice of my prayer when I cry out to you,* when I lift up my hands to your holy of holies.*

An almost implied follow on to this verse might be, “And would you please answer me sometime soon?” We were over at the beach today. The wind was brisk and there were storms out at sea. Ergo, the waves were high and the red flags were flying indicating that it was dangerous to swim. Not that I would this time of year – it was too cold. I tried to ask the Lord for guidance and He pointed out that right now we are like the waves of the ocean – all stirred up and bothered. I already knew that. Later he reminded me that even after the storm passes by it takes time for the waves to settle down. It’s the physics of their being. In other words, it will take time for our lives to settle down as well. First, I have to remember how to be still.

Lord, help me to be still and know that you are God. Amen.

Wednesday, December 8th Amos 8:1-14 / Psalm 38 /
Revelation 1:17–2:7 / Matthew 23:1-12

Matthew 23:9 *And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father – the one in heaven.*

When I was growing up, we had a rector at our church who took this verse literally. If he asked any of the young people about their male parent, he would always refer to them as “dad” not father. I had not noticed that until my own dad pointed it out to me. I suppose I was just as puzzled about that as I am now. Why not refer to the man whom I call dad as my father? Perhaps, because even though he did a good job of loving and providing for us as a family, there was no way he could ever measure up to our Heavenly Father. To equate my dad to the Lord would be to put him on a pedestal, which goes against the commandments. At best, our parents are stand-ins and at some point we must see them as imperfect humans, just like the rest of us. And, when we do that, perhaps we can forgive them for not living up to our construed perfect ideals.

Lord, I thank you for my parents. I thank you for being my Father in Heaven. Amen.

Thursday, December 9th Amos 9:1-10 / Psalm 37:1-18 /
Revelation 2:8-17 / Matthew 23:13-26

Psalm 37:9 *Refrain from anger, leave rage alone; * do not fret yourself; it leads only to evil.*

In the first nine verses of this psalm the words “do not fret” are used three times. Whenever the same words are repeated in scripture in a short sequence of verses, they take on added meaning. Therefore, we can assume the Lord really ***does not want us to fret!*** So, what are you fretting about today that you can lay down at the foot of the cross? OK, I admit. Right after typing that line I had to pause and pray about something that has been occupying most of my waking thoughts. Why don’t you do the same now? Take a moment and lay whatever concern the Spirit brings to mind at the foot of the cross – and leave it there.

Lord, take my life and let it be only, always, all for thee. Amen.

Friday, December 10th Haggai 1:1-15 / Psalm 31 /
Revelation 2:18-29 / Matthew 23:27-39

Matthew 24:37 *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”*

Not having been raised on a farm, I haven't seen a hen gather her brood under her wing, but I can imagine it. At the first sign of danger, the little ones instinctively know where the safest place for them to be is. If baby chicks understand this, you would think people would too. The thing is, most of us are born knowing that certain adults will protect us (usually mom & dad, but not always), and others present a danger. As we get older that instinct doesn't always work so well, especially in the case of teenagers who get in with the “wrong” crowd. Praise the Lord for people and places who have a rapport with the young and can remind them that Jesus longs to gather them under his wing and protect them from the first sign of danger. He longs to do that for all of us no matter what our age is. Are you willing to be sheltered?

Thank you, Lord, for gathering us into your presence. Amen.

Saturday, December 11th Haggai 2:1-9 / Psalm 30, 32 /
Revelation 3:1-6 / Matthew 24:1-14

Psalm 32:10 *Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; * who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you.*

We are a wandering lot, some more than others. As a (very) simple analogy, look at fashionable hemlines. They're up, they're down, they're somewhere in between. We get bored with the familiar and therefore we try something new. Matthew 24:11 talks about the false prophets that will come and lead many astray. If we can so easily be swayed by something so minute as a hemline, can we not also be easily influenced by false prophets? Our bridle is the Bible. Does who or what we follow line up with what the Bible says? If not, perhaps we are too easily swayed.

Lord, open my ears that I may hear you. Amen.

