

AdventWord—Week Three

December 12th - December 18th



This booklet, along with previous weeks are also available as a pdf on the website.

The additional prayers are not included in this booklet once more, please use them from the 1st weeks booklet if you wish to continue to do so.

Monday 12th December - WILDERNESS

Today's word comes from Matthew 1:7

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?"

Day 16

The wilderness is often, if not always, seen as a place where there is no life, even a place of death. But this wilderness is one of life and hope.

The wilderness were somewhere that prophets often lived and John the Baptist was no different. The Prophet, rather than railing against the people, was pointing the people towards the coming Messiah. Jesus was reminding the people that deep in their hearts they knew there was more to John's words than that

which could be blown away by the wind.
Sometimes we need to be reminded that the wilderness is a good place to be, a place where we can learn and grow despite the seemingly inhospitable nature of it.

Activity

If you can and it is something that is healthy for you to do, try and spend today fasting. Freely drink water, and at 6pm, or before if needed have your normal main meal of the day. Contemplate your mental and physical reactions.
If you can't fast for a day, try and give up something that you would usually have, coffee, tea, biscuits, the radio, whatever.

Extra

Pray for those for whom the wilderness experience of being in need of the gifts of life is a daily occurrence.

Tuesday 13th December - STRANGER

Today's word comes from Psalm 146:9
The LORD watches over the stranger; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

Day 17

Those who claim God is only for those and such of those are sadly very mistaken and do God a big dis-service. God is there for everyone, especially the stranger; the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son.

To God there is no stranger, all are precious in God's sight, all made in the image of God. This should be a great joy to us, for if people are treated not as strangers but as one's already known and beloved, then they will quickly know the reality of that.

The Psalmist is clear that while God will indeed watch over the stranger, God will also bring the wicked to ruin. Stranger doesn't equate to wicked nor wicked to stranger. The stranger who treats others well, following the ways of God, even if they do not realise that is what they do, will not know God's wrath.

The wicked, be they stranger or supposed friend, on the other hand.

Activity

Smile at a stranger today, or say hello, or maybe even strike up a conversation.

Wednesday 14th December - BELOVED

Today's word comes from James 5:7

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

Day 18

To be beloved is to be loved beyond all else, to be held precious despite everything. When we realised we are the beloved of God it should be one of those transformational moments in our lives. When we acknowledge we are beloved of God we have nothing to prove to ourselves or to anyone else. For there is nothing we can do that will make God love us more, while it is impossible for God to love us less. So our flaws should no longer blind us to the love of God, and even more other people's flaws shouldn't blind us and worse still distract us from wallow in the fact that God loves us and counts us as precious.

Activity

The verse speaks of being patient. Consider how knowing we are God's beloved frees us. Resting in that knowledge of being loved, consider how that knowledge helps us to be patient, especially during these Advent times.

Extra

There are lots of people in the Old Testament who spent the majority of their lives waiting for God to fulfil the promises made. Spend some time listening to this song based on psalm 40, if you don't have access to the internet read the psalm.

Consider how this knowledge helps you wait.

[Billings: I Waited Patiently for God - YouTube](#)

Thursday 15th December - THIRSTY

Today's word comes from Isaiah 35:7

the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

Day 19

Can you remember a time when you were thirsty, really thirsty. Maybe it was a hot day, maybe you were on a walk, maybe you woke up in the middle of the night.

A healthy body is made up of over 70% water, at times the level drops because of stress of one kind or another. If we do not bring our bodies water back up then slowly our body will start to shut down the organs that might manage without it. The body can survive but can not flourish for a time without water, eventually however if the equilibrium isn't resumed then the body will die.

God provided water in the wilderness for the Israelites escaping Egypt. God provided Samson and Ruth with water. The book of Proverbs says 'Good news from far away is like cold water to the thirsty.' (25:25) Water helps us live both physically and spiritually.

Activity

In our spiritual journey there are things that are needed, like water, if we are to keep spiritually healthy.

List those things you think are important to your spiritual journey. How can you make sure you don't thirst for them?

Extra

Sit down with a glass of water, slowly sip it being aware of it entering your body and slipping down your throat. Pray about God reviving you just as the water does. You might wish to use this prayer.

Holy God, as you seep into every atom of my body as this water seeps into every cell, giving me life and refreshing those areas barren and dry. Help me to live the hope your live giving water and your Spirit gives me. Amen.

Friday 16th December - TRAVELLER

Today's word comes from Isaiah 35:8

A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.

Day 20

Recently Paul was planning his annual Christmas journey to his mother down in Kent. This year there was the addition of adding in a visit to our Godchildren in Gatehouse of Fleet. He knows the journey well to either place but combining the two took a we bit of planning plus I was not joining him on the trip to his mother so he was relying on the satnav. It is a good job he has a satnav, for while my father called me a homing pigeon, her can hardly find his way from work to home after a year without the aid of the voice in his car.

The Holy Spirit is the voice of God in our ear, if we chose to listen to it. Directing us along the way which is easiest and quickest. What is more if we take a wrong turn it will remind us that we need to turn around should we want to get back on the right path.

Me on the other hand, maybe I am a fool, likes to take the scenic routes, the alternative routes, the roads with warning signs on them. I always end up back on the correct road, but the adventure also always teaches me something. Even if it is not to be so foolhardy next time I see a very steep single track road with no passing places and a warning of logging vehicles. (That was a very long reverse!)

Activity

Take a sheet of paper and map out in words or images your Advent journey so far. On the other side of the paper write everything you know or presume about Mary and Joseph;s journey. They are now making their way towards Bethlehem, what got them on that dusty road?

Think about what one thing might have made the difference in that journey.

Extra

Get a map and trace your journey from the place of your birth to where you live now. Pray for all those places where you have stayed and the significant things that happened at them.

Saturday 17th December - MAJESTY

Today's word comes from Isaiah 35:2
it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel
and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty
of our God.

Day 21

What does the word majesty mean to you?

*impressive beauty, scale, or stateliness.
royal power.*

a title given to a sovereign or a sovereign's wife or widow.

We can marvel at the glorious Scottish scenery which we often
take so much for granted.

We can acknowledge the power of God in our lives and in the
world.

We can use the title of majesty when referring to God.

Advent calls us to do more than all these three however, through
Advent we are called to realign our whole lives to be in light of
what it means to have someone who is majestic as our closest
and most dependable friend. Someone who is way beyond us in
so many ways, yet was born in a more humble state than we
were. Someone who knows just what it is to be human and
engage with a world that doesn't always understand, often point
blankly refuses to understand. Yet continues to reach out and
say, I who have everything, who are beyond everything. I who
am. Wants to spend time with you.

Does anyone fully understand God's majesty? It is another of
those things which is limited by human words, by human

understanding, by our human vocabulary.
God's majesty is far bigger than we can grasp, but also far humbler than the word envisions.

Activity

Think about what you might do in the world, if you were a king or queen. How might you try and change or influence things? Is there any way you can think of to change and influence things regardless of titles or lack of them?

Extra

Make, or draw, a paper crown and write the names of God on it.

Sunday 18th December - PURIFY

Today's word comes from Psalm 51:2

Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin.

Day 15

Since Covid-19 we have all been made more aware of the power of purifying. Be it washing your hands while singing happy birthday, wearing facemasks, or using hand gel and wiping down surfaces. Purifying our surroundings has become a way of life and a way to protect life.

If we don't purify then we run the risk of contagion. Even now with the vaccines protecting the worse of symptoms.

While Covid-19 is nothing about sin or guilt, it is about how easy those things that can destroy life and society can spread and how the fear of them can mean we need to reassess many things if we are to keep ourselves pure.

Of course sometimes even the best defence can be broken through, that doesn't mean the defence is pointless rather it means that the defence is that, a defence making the chances less likely and the outcome less severe.

If we take time each day to pray. If we not only read but also study our Bibles. If we spend time with other Christians exploring and sharing our faith. If we join in worshipping God with others. If we spend time listening to the Holy Spirit's guidance. If we say Lord, lord, not only with our lips but with our

hearts and minds. Each of these things will offer us another layer of protection, just like the vaccine boosters, in our journey of faith and the trials we will face along the way.

Activity

Try and take time today to ask God how your life might be further purified so that you are ready to welcome Jesus at his return. Give thanks for all those who have been your protection and guides throughout your life.

Extra

Last week for the word winnowing it was suggested you might sort things. Consider how God purifies that which is sorted. How do you think that impacts on your own life?