

# Sunday, December 8, 2013

**Welcome** – Greg Snow

**Call to Worship** – *Psalm 130:6-7*

This is the season of Advent – the season where we prepare for Christmas. It's a season when we not only celebrate the coming Messiah, but we remember the anticipation of the world for Him.

We remember Israel, who heard of his coming from the prophets, we remember those who need to experience his mercy for the first time as the church lives out its mission, and we remember that he will come again.

Hear the word of the Lord from Psalm 130, Verses 6 & 7...

*I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his Word I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning.*

*There is no darkness with you, O Lord.*

*O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plenteous redemption.*

*There is no darkness with you, O Lord.*

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.*

*There is no darkness with you, O Lord.*

**Song of Worship** – *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

**May We Know Peace** – *Psalm 85:7-13*

Show us your unfailing love, O God, our Savior, and grant us your salvation. Listen to what the Lord our God says: He promises peace to his people, who are his beloved saints. The Lord will indeed give what is good. Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps. May the Lord make his holy face to shine upon us in this time of Advent worship. May we see God's face and so know peace.

**Song of Worship** – *O Great God*

**Confession of Sin & Prayer**

While we ask, Lord, for the most meaningful Advent season ever, we sadly confess having done so little with so much. Forgive us Lord, for not bending the knee, for not reading your Word, for not searching our hearts, for not facing our sins. Forgive us according to your tender mercies, O God! Grant that when Christmas morning breaks for us this year, we may have a fresh sense of your presence and a renewed resolve to live to the praise of Christ's glory.

Let us take the next few moments to silently pray to God, asking for forgiveness of sins. Let's pray.

### **Assurance of Salvation – Jeremiah 33:14-16**

Hear these words of promise found in Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness." People of God: Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose coming we announce in this season, is our righteousness. In Christ, we are made right with God.

[Thanks be to God!](#)

### **Songs of Worship – Joy to the World/Jesus the Son of God**

**Offering** "Rejoice that the immortal God is born, so that mortal man may live in eternity." - John Huss

### **The Pursuing Love of God – Psalm 23:6**

*Hear the word of God found in Psalm 23:6...*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Psalm 23 has given countless numbers comfort and encouragement. It consistently speaks solace and care to the troubled soul. But could it be saying more than we expect? Verse 6 reads, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life." The Hebrew word for "follow" in this verse is the same word used for a pursuing army. Therefore, the verse could be translated "surely goodness and love pursue me." Or possibly, "surely goodness and love track me down."

Who pursues us like no human lover ever would? Who would go to the ends of the earth to draw us to Himself? Who looks for us and seeks us out to no end? Who has released the hounds of heaven to retrieve us? Who will never leave, nor forsake us? God is Who.

We might think that we have chosen God, but scripture indicates that God has been lovingly and patiently pursuing us all of our lives. Those who are Christians or may someday become Christians, are being continually pursued as a lost love does their soul mate. The pursuit is relentless, it is effectual, it is with great intensity that God the Father seeks those to whom will be His children for now and for eternity. And God never gives up this pursuit.

Before we had anything to offer him, before we lifted our voices in praise or our hands to His work, before we opened a bible or walked into a church building, in fact even before we were ever created God was pursuing us with his love.

We don't deserve the Love of God. We are gossips and worriers, we are lazy and irritable, we are controlled by our lusts and our appetites. We search after everything but God and turn our backs on Him at every turn, and he still comes after us, chasing us, pursuing us with His unending love.

His love was announced by a baby in a manger. His love was proven by his body on a cross. In this time, in this place, let us dwell on that love. Let us put aside thoughts of trees and presents and malls and meals and focus on God's pursuing love.

He is pursuing you right now. He knows you, knows your thoughts, and your actions. He is close to you, dwelling with you, delighting in you, and he loves you. Today is one more time that he is reminding you of that love.

Today is one more time where God is reaching out to you and asking you to drink deep of Him and his love for you. No matter where you come from, no matter what is going on in your life, or who has let you down or abandoned you, God has sought you out, and brought you here to say, "I love you."

This advent season let us be reminded that God promised to send the Savior, and He faithfully fulfilled that promise. God is pursuing those who He has called to be His children. Is He pursuing you? Don't delay in responding to his call. "...Behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2)

**Songs of Worship** – *How Deep the Father's Love For Us/We Fall Down*

**Message** – *"The Parable of the Vineyard"*

*Scripture Reference: Matthew 20:1-16*

**Time of Prayer**

**Song of Worship** – *In Christ Alone*

### **Observance of The Lord's Supper**

#### **In Remembrance**

Holy are you, O God, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected. As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born, so by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. As your Word became flesh, born of a woman, on that night long ago, so on the night in which he gave himself up for us he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Prayer for the Bread**

**Passing of the Bread**

**Partaking of the Bread** – *Luke 22:19*

**Prayer for the Cup**

**Passing of the Cup**

**Partaking of the Cup** – *Luke 22:20*

**Proclaiming the Lord's Death** – *1 Corinthians 11:26*

**Benediction**