

Devotional Diary 15 -21 December 2014

Rhythm of Worship // www.jamesnicolson.co.za

4th Sunday of Advent, Year B

Readings for the week, with thanks to gbod.org

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16: Nathan brings good news and a reality check to David. The good news: God intends to establish David's lineage permanently, though conditionally. The reality: God has been present with God's people by being in their midst as they have travelled (the tabernacle, "incarnation") and has no need for David to build a temple.

Luke 1:47-55. The Song of Mary. If you don't hear and feel Mary pregnant with the end of this age and the hope for the coming one in this song, you're not listening or singing her song yet!

Romans 16:25-27. A concluding doxology that joins the eternal praise of God for revealing the mystery of salvation intended for the whole world in Jesus Christ.

Luke 1:26-38. The angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will become pregnant by God and bear the Son of the Most High whose throne will be eternal. She consents. Do we?

Monday:

Adoration Focus: The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. (Psalm 98:2)

Confession: "Seeking to worship the Christ child." Lord, forgive us when we seek our own comfort first. Today help us to seek out the Christ child.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom

Shared Focus: This week's focus: Praying for Africa. Today: Pray for progress towards the eradication of poverty in Africa. Pray through the eyes of God's compassion.

Personal prayers: (Use this section to list people you need to pray for or situations of personal concern that you need to bring before God in prayer)

Dedication: Lord Jesus, you came as a tiny baby to be present to this world, to serve and care and bring life. Today, dear Lord, help me to be present to this world to bring the life of Christ in service and care to others.

Tuesday:

Adoration Focus: Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. (Psalm 95:6)

Confession: "Seeking to worship the Christ child." Lord, forgive us when we seek to fulfill only our own plans. Today help us to seek out the Christ child.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week's focus: Praying for Africa. Today: Pray for the improvement of basic health services in Africa.

Personal Prayers:

Dedication: Lord Jesus, you came as a tiny baby to be present to this world, to serve and care and bring life. Today, dear Lord, help me to be present to this world to bring the life of Christ in service and care to others.

Wednesday:

Adoration Focus: We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks, for your name is near;...(Psalm 75:1)

Confession: "Seeking to worship the Christ child." Lord, forgive us when we seek peace but are unwilling to sacrifice for peace. Today help us to seek out the Christ child.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week's focus: Praying for Africa. Today: Pray for the diseases that ravage our continent. Focus particularly on HIV, Aids, tuberculosis and malaria.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Lord Jesus, you came as a tiny baby to be present to this world, to serve and care and bring life. Today, dear Lord, help me to be present to this world to bring the life of Christ in service and care to others.

Thursday:

Adoration Focus: All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name. (Psalm 66:4)

Confession: "Seeking to worship the Christ child." Lord, forgive us when we seek to be guided by the idols of our age. Today help us to seek out the Christ child.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week's focus: Praying for Africa. Today: Pray for the education of the youth and people of Africa.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Lord Jesus, you came as a tiny baby to be present to this world, to serve and care and bring life. Today, dear Lord, help me to be present to this world to bring the life of Christ in service and care to others.

Friday:

Adoration Focus: (Psalm 31:21) Praise be to the Lord, for he showed his wonderful love to me...

Confession: "Seeking to worship the Christ child." Lord, forgive us when we seek to succeed and look good at the expense of others. Today help us to seek out the Christ child.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This weeks focus: Praying for Africa. Today: Pray against corruption in Africa, pray for the spread of scriptural holiness and Kingdom of God values.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Lord Jesus, you came as a tiny baby to be present to this world, to serve and care and bring life. Today, dear Lord, help me to be present to this world to bring the life of Christ in service and care to others.

Saturday:

Adoration Focus: (Psalm 33:11) But his plans endure forever; his purposes last eternally.

Confession: "Seeking to worship the Christ child." Lord, forgive us when we seek revenge and not forgiveness. Today help us to seek out the Christ child.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This weeks focus: Praying for Africa. Today: Pray for all the homeless that they may find secure shelter and care.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Lord Jesus, you came as a tiny baby to be present to this world, to serve and care and bring life. Today, dear Lord, help me to be present to this world to bring the life of Christ in service and care to others.

Sunday:

Adoration Focus: (Psalm 37:4) Seek your happiness in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desire.

Confession: "Seeking to worship the Christ child." Lord, forgive us when we seek to give value only to that which feeds our framework of life. Today help us to seek out the Christ child.

The Word:

Seeking the Kingdom:

Shared Focus: This week's focus: Praying for Africa. Today: Pray that the coming of the Christ child may bring hope to all the children of Africa. Pray that the church in Africa may take its mission seriously.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Lord Jesus, you came as a tiny baby to be present to this world, to serve and care and bring life. Today, dear Lord, help me to be present to this world to bring the life of Christ in service and care to others.

Weekly Rhythm

Exploring Scripture - Joining our stories with the stories of Gods people

Comments in italics thanks to www.gbod.org:

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16: *Nathan brings good news and a reality check to David. The good news: God intends to establish David's lineage permanently, though conditionally. The reality: God has been present with God's people by being in their midst as they have travelled (the tabernacle, "incarnation") and has no need for David to build a temple.*

God's "house" is sometimes quite different to our expectations. Can you think of surprising dwelling places that God chooses?

Luke 1:47-55. *The Song of Mary. If you don't hear and feel Mary pregnant with the end of this age and the hope for the coming one in this song, you're not listening or singing her song yet!*

Two prayers to help you reflect on this passage:

Never put your faith in worldly status,
and never underestimate your heavenly importance.

**My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.**

Let your trust in the coming of Christ soar within you like wings of joy.
Go out into the world and serve one another as God-bearers.

**My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.**

Grace, mercy and peace, from God our Creator,
through Jesus our Saviour,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit our Nurturer,
be with you this day and evermore.

Amen!

~ written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on Bruce Prewer's Home Page. <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>

Prayer of Approach

(based on Luke 1: 46-55)

Our hearts praise you, O Lord,
our spirits rejoice in God our saviour,
for you have remembered us,
your humble servants.
Mighty God, we celebrate
the great things you have done for us—
your name is holy!
From one generation to another
you have shown mercy on those who honour you.
You have stretched out your mighty arm,
scattering the conceited,
confusing their schemes.
You bring down tyrants
and lift up the lowly;
you fill the hungry with good things,
but send the rich away empty.
You have kept your promises to us;
you have come to our help;
you will show your people your love for ever;

our hearts praise you, O Lord. **Amen.**

~ written by Michael Perry in *Bible Praying*. Posted on The Jubilate Group website. <http://www.jubilate.co.uk/>

Romans 16:25-27. *A concluding doxology that joins the eternal praise of God for revealing the mystery of salvation intended for the whole world in Jesus Christ.*

How might this doxology be a summary of the message which Paul teaches in his letters?

Luke 1:26-38. *The angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will become pregnant by God and bear the Son of the Most High whose throne will be eternal. She consents. Do we?*

How would you have responded to the angel's message?

What can you learn from Mary?

A prayer for Advent: Waiting for the Kingdom

(inspired by Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18, Luke 1:47-55)

Lord, we wait with eager expectation for the coming of Your kingdom
when the humble will be exalted and the hungry fed.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we prepare for Your advent with searching minds and contrite hearts,
trusting in Your healing spirit and redemptive love.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we watch with those who wait and weep,
longing to see the rule of justice and the reign of peace.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we seek You among the despised and rejected,
knowing that there we will find Your light shining in the dark.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we proclaim sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed,
trusting in Your tender mercy and passion for justice.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we work with others to proclaim Your truth,
challenging the mighty and raising the meek.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we wrestle with our hopes and our fears, our struggles and our joys
laboring with creation to come to new birth.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ Annabel Shilson-Thomas. Posted on the Christian Brothers of the Midwest website. <http://www.cbmidwest.org/>