

Northminster Presbyterian Church
Weekly Devotional
Week of December 7th – December 13th, 2008
2nd Sunday in Advent

Scripture Readings

- Isaiah 40:1-11
- Psalm 85:1-13
- 2 Peter 3:8-15
- Mark 1:1-8

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11 (NRSV)

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Devotion:

The Jews had endured 200 years of being held captive in Babylon. Had God abandoned them? These verses speak of hope, forgiveness and peace in the midst of a chapter that shows the turning point for the Jews. We hear about a future and hope to rebuild the ruins.

In my own life, I have recently cried out to God. I had been suffering under the control of addiction of comfort eating for most of my life – sometimes controlling it better than others. I tried all the available resources, but nothing had worked. As I drove along that morning I cried out to God: “I need your help I am not able to do this myself.” The response I heard was: “Just do your part and I will take care of the rest.” I understood my part was to find time to exercise and be watchful of my eating. That day I did exercise.

Weeks passed, then months and, praise God, I am losing weight. Did I relapse? Yes. I have learned that God is faithful in forgiving a multitude of sins and with him nothing is impossible. His plans are always for our good. His mercy endures forever.

Many in our world are crying out today. Whether believers or nonbelievers of Jesus Christ, they are all heard by God. I encourage you to take time this season of Advent to pray, listen and share what God did in your life at a turning point when you cried out. Give the hopeless hope.

Pastor Stacey