



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

December 9, 2018

### The Second Sunday of Advent: Peace and the Prophetic Word

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end ... The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.* –Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

*And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts* –2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:19

Thinking of the Christmas as a Season of miracles misses the point. Christmas is the miracle. Christians don't believe in "good will for all" in some vague, sentimental way. We believe in a God who acts in history—the God who entered our World in His Son to become part of our lives. We believe in Jesus Christ, who lives in our hearts, reigns on earth, and will reign forever. Christmas isn't a time of wishing. It's a time of fulfillment.

God is working out a plan for this world. When He fulfills prophecy, He's not just showing off. He's demonstrating His purpose and shining the light of truth in our dark world. As people chase their dreams, and as our competing aims bring confusion and conflict, God's prophetic Word reveals the truth that God is in charge, working out His good plan for the world and everyone in it. And that truth gives us peace.

Nothing conveys a sense of peace like a sleeping baby. The image of Baby Jesus "asleep on the hay" sings God's lullaby to His people, assuring us that all is well. When Jesus slept soundly in the boat on the stormy sea, He was at peace—until His panicked disciples jarred Him awake. Then Jesus simply commanded the storm to "Stop!" and it did. He told the tossing sea to "Be still!" and it was. The prophets who foretold *to us a child is born, to us a son is given* (Isaiah 9:6) also predicted that *He shall speak peace to the nations* and reign to the ends of the earth (Zechariah 9:10). Fulfillment of Scriptural prophecy assures us that all things will be well—as He predicted.

So does the testimony of Scripture. Peter was an eyewitness to all Jesus did and taught. He watched the Savior fulfill Old Testament prophesy. He saw Jesus stop the storm and calm the sea. He watched Jesus die, then he spoke with Him again after He rose from the grave. He witnessed the transfiguration, when Jesus shined with heavenly glory. Peter knew he wasn't telling *cleverly devised myths*, ... but was an *eyewitness of His majesty* (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:16). Peter saw *the zeal of the Lord of Hosts* do what He said He would. Peter didn't just wish for miracles. He watched them happen, and Peter himself performed miracles.

Longing for miracles to happen—hoping for the world to become a better place—denies the reality of how dark the world truly is and how great a Redeemer we worship. Christmas celebrates the light shining in the darkness, and Christians are clear-eyed. Having the Light enables us to see the darkness and call it what it is. Without Christ, the world is doomed to deny reality and cling to false hopes and pallid ideals. Believers in Christ shine the light of His glory, which exposes and displaces the world's darkness.

All the world's ideals find their reality in the God who made us—the Creator who wrapped Himself in flesh, was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and later in a burial shroud—but only after He had conquered sin and death forever. Christians like Peter—Christians like us—bear witness to the Christ of Christmas and shine the light of Salvation through Him.

To the praise of His glory.

## Prayer for Today

Ask God to prepare us, and the pastor He leads to us, to work together for the ministry of the Gospel.

1. Partnering together for the gospel involves having the same goal in mind. Pastors and their congregation should place the advancement of the gospel above all other matters.
2. Partnering together for the gospel requires looking out for the interests of others. Pastors and their congregation should follow the example of Christ in all circumstances.
3. Partnering together for the gospel includes both justification and sanctification. Pastors and their congregation should rest in the work of Christ and live for the glory of Christ.
4. Partnering together for the gospel necessitates sacrifice and trust. Pastors and their congregation should be content with what they have and generous with what they give.

Pray for yourself and our entire Body, including our leaders ...

- **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, Taylor Mendoza, and Marti Wiegman.
- **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah.
- **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Jacob Williams, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

## Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant. —Luke 2:68-72*