

Devotional

Open the Gates

November 29, 2020

Monday

Read Psalm 24

The words of the hymn, *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*:

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits; the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide. Let me thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.

Read them over a few times as your rest in the Lord. Make this your prayer and heart's desire today.

Tuesday

Read Luke 15:11-32

The best welcome you can give to anyone is to make space in your life for them. To make room in your heart, mind, and spirit to care about them and who they are. To generously offer your time, talent, and resources to them. What kind of welcome is it if you politely but unenthusiastically open the door for your guests, acknowledge them, and then leave them alone and go back to what you were doing? Contrast that with dashing out to meet them when they come up the road, greeting them enthusiastically with a hug or handshake, walking them inside, taking their coat, giving them nice slippers to wear, showing them to the most comfortable seat, offering them a rich variety of snacks and drinks, and then settling in for a joyous conversation. Which one would you rather receive? Which one seems more suited for a king?

How will you welcome your king this season?

Wednesday

Read John 14:1-14

Jesus wasn't born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, grow up, work, teach, minister, heal, proclaim the message of God, and be obedient to that message through his sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection on the third day simply so that you could go to a nice place when you die. Jesus' resurrection is the pioneering example of our own resurrection and the first taste of the new heavens and new earth Jesus will create when he returns. When Jesus says in this passage that his father's house has many rooms, he isn't talking about a mansion in the sky in which to take up residence for eternity. The rooms Jesus talks about are better thought of as nice hotel rooms. They are great, hospitable places to stay for a while, but they are not a permanent residence. Jesus and all the saints who have gone before us are waiting to go somewhere else – a new earth. What gives you hope about knowing that Jesus has a plan for you for this day and every day in the future?

Thursday

Read Isaiah 2:1-5

As a follower of Jesus, you reside in him and he resides in you right now and forever. Jesus has a permanent room in your house and you have a permanent room in his house. If we are doing it right, it is like when you were a kid with your best neighborhood friend. You wandered over to their house or they wandered over to yours. There wasn't a long series of invitations and preparations, you just went to hang out with each other. You were in each other's presence. And at some point your mothers would quip that they weren't sure how many kids even belonged to them anymore.

And when Jesus returns, we will all share one house on a renewed earth that is joined with the fullness of heaven that is better than anything we could imagine. No walls. No fences. No security systems. No death, destruction, sickness, or pain. For today, what greater safety and security, hope and joy could we have than Jesus dwelling with us and us with him?

Friday

In preparation for Sunday worship, please read and reflect upon John 3:1-21 and 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 as we head into the second Sunday of Advent.