

Watching Daily At My Gates

December 9 Read I Peter 3:19-22

In an earlier passage we looked at being ready to give an answer. Here we have an example of Noah who preached for 120 years to people who did not want to hear. We must never give up in our witnessing. God will use our faithful witness for his glory and the benefit of the elect. This will be for our benefit as well as those to whom we witness. We also have the comfort of the fact of Christ's resurrection, ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God. With Jesus our advocate we have no reason to fear those who may try to harm us. Sing Psalter 273.

December 10 Read Psalm 8

Young people you spend many hours at school and home studying science. All of science is God's creation. As we study various parts of God's creation, we need to remember who we are and who God is. Because we are created beings ourselves, we must never pretend to be wiser than our creator. We have many responsibilities as head of creation; we must never misuse them. Finally verse 9 must be foremost in our minds. In all of creation we must seek to see the excellent name of God. Sing Psalter 15.

December 11 Read Psalm 16:1-11

This Psalm has been one of great comfort to God's people in every age. There are many verses from which we can gain comfort and instruction. In verse one the Psalmist prays that God will preserve him. He says that he trusts in the Lord and in that trust he can pray. Preservation of God means much. It means that he preserves us in all the trials in this life, and it means that he will preserve us until he brings us to heaven. Because of this we can trust him to do everything for us in a way that is good for us. Now you pick a verse and think about it for a short time. Then don't forget to pray. Sing Psalter 29.

December 12 Read Psalm 19:1-6

Students and teachers alike profit from studying Psalm 19. First of all, we have guidance in what we study in creation. It does not have to be astronomy. God's handiwork is visible in chemistry, human anatomy, and other sciences as well. Because God is a God of order, we can find orderliness in all of creation. We also can see Christ in all of creation as well. As we learned yesterday, God preserves his people. In creation we have a picture of that preservation. Sing Psalter 37.

December 13 Read Colossians 1:1-10

Let's look at a New Testament passage today. Paul in his epistles was writing to real people. He was also by inspiration writing to the church of all ages. We can take personal instruction in each of his epistles. Verses 9-10 are what I wish to point out today. First of all young people, your parents and grandparents spend many hours in prayer for you. They especially try to pray for your spiritual life. They want you to do well and succeed in your lives, but they are more desirous that you "walk worthy of the Lord" in all that you do. This is akin to John rejoicing to hear that his children are "walking in the truth". Continue to learn about our God and Savior, and he will grant the desires of your heart.

December 14 Read Colossians 1:11-20

Two ideas come to mind in reading through this passage. First of all, we see who Christ is and for what purpose he was created. As I said a few days ago we can not help but in creation see who our creator is. Verse 16 tells us that by Christ, remember John 1, all things were created by him but also they were created for him. Secondly, verse twenty brings to us great comfort. Because of the cross we are reconciled to him. God's people are blessed because they can see all things in Christ. Sing Psalter 85.

December 15 Read Colossians 1:21-29

Reread verse 23 again. The word hope has popped up several times in my Bible wanderings the past week. Even as we saw in I Peter 3 the child of God must have the hope of salvation and the return of Christ. How do we have that hope? We have that hope by being grounded and settled in the faith. How are we grounded and settled? We are grounded and settled by the Holy Spirit in our hearts working in us to study the Word and to not leave the truths found in that Word. We have the truth of the mystery of God. Let us learn it and use it. And then we will never leave it. Sing Psalter 363.

December 16 Read Genesis 3:14-21

Verse 15 of this chapter is commonly called the Mother Promise. It is called this because to Eve was first given the hope of the Savior. As we begin preparations for our celebration of Christmas, we must ever be aware of what Christmas means. It does not mean trees, presents, colored lights, and all of those trappings. It does not even mean a baby in a manger, shepherds, wise men, and all of that. Christmas is the promise of the Savior. As Christ was announced to Adam and Eve, a sacrifice went with the announcement. Adam and Eve were cursed with hard work and pain, but they

were also given the hope of the Savior who would redeem them from their sins. Is this our celebration of Christmas? Sing Psalter 50.

December 17 Read Genesis 49:1-12

Who is Jesus? Jesus is the gatherer of the nations. Jesus is Shiloh. He is the one who brings true peace to his people. People of God, are you despondent, out of sorts with your life? Go to Shiloh because Shiloh is the Prince of peace. He will gather you in his arms and hold you and give you peace. The tribe of Judah had this hope throughout their generations. Now the hope that is found in Christ is found in all manner of people. Let the nations rejoice and give thanks and praise the Prince of Peace who is Christ the Lord. Sing Psalter 355.

December 18 Read Numbers 24:12-19

Witness the testimony of Balaam the son of Beor. Even the unbeliever is forced to confess of the reality of the birth of Christ! As Balaam speaks this beautiful prophecy of Christ, it is not his desire. Today many speak of Christ, but they do not wish to speak of the reality of what Christ means for them. For the unbeliever the reality is destruction. The Star out of Jacob and the Scepter from Israel will smite those who do not confess him as their Savior. Christ will have dominion over land and sea. Is this what you see in Christmas, people of God? Do you see the king and not just a baby in the manger? Forget the shallow Christ of the Christmas carol and worship the king of heaven and earth. Sing Psalter 200.

December 19 Read Isaiah 7:10-16

The unbelieving Ahaz did not want to hear about the true Christ of Christmas. He did not want to hear of him who would save Israel from their sins. Therefore God himself gave the sign of the virgin birth. He gave to his son the name Immanuel—God with us. What can we say about us, people of God? Do we want to hear of our Savior this Christmas? Wouldn't we rather concentrate upon the things of Christmas rather than the Christ of Christmas? Look who this Son is. Confess this Son and worship him. Let us see the signs of Christ, and let us not be like Ahaz and refuse to watch for Christ. Sing Psalter 331.

December 20 Read Isaiah 9:1-7

Tomorrow we will look at the familiar verses six and seven. Today let's look at verse two. It was a dark time for Israel as Isaiah spoke and penned the words of these prophecies. Foreign nations were ready to pounce upon them. Sin and evil worship was rampant throughout the land. Is it any different for us? Some of God's church

face extreme persecution throughout the world. Sin and evil worship are rampant even in much of what calls itself church. Out of that darkness the light of Christ falls upon the true believer. Are we looking for that light? Are we walking in that light? Let us look for the light even as we go throughout this season. Sing Psalter 71.

December 21 Read Isaiah 9:1-7

Do we sometimes wonder about the reality of Christ's birth? If we do, then we doubt the zeal of Jehovah as is spoken in verse 7. A child has been born unto us. We have been given the Wonderful One, the comforting Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. When we listen to the beautiful strains of the *Messiah* we must not just focus on the melody. We must focus on the meaning of the words. Many singers have sung of Christ. Of whom have they sung? Are they like Balaam? What about us? What do we hear? Of whom do we confess? Those who are contemplating confession of faith think about that truth. Let us consider these wonderful words as we go through this Christmas season. Sing Psalter 266.

December 22 Read Isaiah 53

Is the Christ of Isaiah fifty-three the Christ of whom we speak and sing during this Christmas season? Do we confess one despised by men and acquainted with grief? Is that what is portrayed by Christmas cards, posters, and celebrations? We probably should read this chapter once a day during the advent season. We should do this so that we have a proper understanding of our Christ. He does not stay in the manger. He does not continue to be the miracle worker adored by many. He becomes bruised and bloodied at the cross for the sins of his people. People of God, young people, he does this for us. This is the personal Christ whom we must confess and to whom we must cling. Read Isaiah fifty-three again and then, in tears, go to your Savior in prayer and confess the true Christ of Christmas. Sing Psalter 140.

December 23 Read Micah 5:1-7

Not only do we find the prophesied place of Christ's birth in this part of Scripture, we find our Savior. Look at the passage again. How many references do you find of Christ and his work other than verse two. Look at the wonderful words about the remnant. A remnant is not often something desired. Yet, we need to desire to be part of that remnant. That remnant will be blessed of God. That remnant will be fed of Christ and led to the holy hill of the Lord. Think about this people of God. Think about this as we draw closer to not only Christmas but to the day of the Lord when Christ will return upon the clouds of heaven and bring us unto himself. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift! Sing Psalter 58.

December 24 Read Isaiah 60:1-9

What a glorious passage of Scripture this is! Here we find the true Christ of Christmas. He is the light of the world. All manner of men will be drawn unto him. We will be drawn unto him! We, the worst of sinners, have been brought to the brightest of lights. We will see the glorious One who reigns in heaven and earth. We must lift up our eyes to see him. We cannot let our eyes be blinded by the world's glory which is no glory. When we lift up our eyes we see Christ and, blessing of blessings!, our children see Christ. Let us show them that Christ of Christmas and let us glorify that name which is above every name. Sing Psalter 362.

December 25 Read Luke 2:1-20

What a beautiful Christmas story this is! There are no lights or tinsel. We just find salvation in the manger in Bethlehem. God is good to his people. Of that there is no doubt. He was good to those lowly shepherds watching their sheep. Not only did they get to hear the heavenly chorus sing "Glory to God." They had the privilege of worshipping Christ the King. What did they do when they saw the great salvation lying before them? They went out and spread the good news to others. Oh, the world was not interested in Jesus as we will find out tomorrow, but the church rejoiced in her Lord and King. Let us do that today as we celebrate Christmas correctly. Sing Psalter 125.

December 26 Read Jeremiah 31:10-17

Yesterday we saw the church's reaction to the birth of Christ. Today we see the world's reaction. The world wished to kill Christ many years ago. The world still wishes to kill Christ. We see this in its celebration of Christmas. In the commercialism of the day Christ is forgotten, and not only forgotten but also killed. The world will accept a child in a manger, but it wants to leave him there. Satan knows who Christ is. Satan knew then and knows now that his head will be crushed. It was crushed at the cross, and it will be completely crushed at the return of Christ. Let us think about this truth at Christmas, and then let us rejoice in the newborn king. Sing Psalter 198.

December 27 Read Isaiah 40:1-11

Yesterday a bleak picture was painted about the world around us. But fear not, people of God, he has given to us utmost comfort. In times of distress and trouble we need to turn to his word. In this portion of Scripture we find that comfort. Israel was in distress because of Assyria and her own sin. In the midst of that distress Isaiah spoke these words of comfort to them. These words are for us the church of today. We know that this life is temporal, but we also know that there are good tidings at hand. Our

Shepherd is coming again to gather our children and us unto him. That babe did not remain in the manger. That babe is our King! Thanks be to God for such an unspeakable gift. Sing Psalter 362.

December 28 Read Psalm 52:1-9

Look at verse eight again. No matter how bad it may seem around us, in God's house we grow. In various passages of Scripture we heard about our deserved judgment. But because of God's mercy we can be confident and assured that he will care for us. Some of you have experienced those who do not feel that assurance. It is hard for some of you to see such a person grieve because of that lack of assurance. This text shows that it is not up to us but it is rather in God's hand. Sing Psalter 145.

December 29 Read Psalm 103:1-7

This Psalm has many beautiful ideas in it. First of all we see the idea of blessing the Lord. We tend to think that God is to bless us. But the word bless means to speak well of. This is something that we must do always. We must not forget his benefits. They are many. They encompass both the spiritual and the physical. Even in sickness there is a physical benefit. It may be hard for us to understand this, but it is there. Notice the idea of youth and the eagle in verse five. Remember that the next time you see an eagle. Reread this Psalm and look for these ideas. Sing Psalter 277.

December 30 Read Psalm 103:8-12

One of my favorite verses is verse 12. When you think of the geography of "as far as the east is from the west," you get a little picture of God's love for us. We sing in Psalter 362 "Our sins mount up against us." Then you read this verse and understand what mercy really is. God is our Father; he is not like an earthly father whose anger is sinful. He is angry at our sins, but through Christ he looks at us in love. For this reason we should live lives of thankfulness toward him in all that we do. Sing Psalter 280.

December 31 Read Psalm 103:13-18

Two hundred seventy-eight is the Psalter number which goes with verse 13. Because of sin earthly fathers have trouble pitying their children. Pity here does not mean to feel sorry for them. It means to lovingly care for them. But God, who knows who we are, can pity us perfectly. It is most comforting to know that his mercy is forever and for us. We must strive to keep his covenant, not to gain that covenant but because we are part of the covenant. As we end another year tonight, these words must be our thoughts. If they are, we will have no problem ignoring the senseless partying of the

world. We will remember that each day is the Lord's, and that he holds all things in his hands. Sing Psalter 278.

January 1 Read Psalm 19-22

This is a glorious end to a glorious Psalm. Verse 19 proclaims God's sovereignty. The final three verses tell us to speak well of Jehovah in all and by all that we do. We cannot stop blessing our God. You must do this in all of your studies. I must do this in all of my teaching. To do anything else is to deny God's sovereignty. As we begin this new year, we are reminded of God's sovereignty. It is God who brings each new day, new week, new month, and new year to pass. We look at this day as bringing us one day closer to Christ's return. The only resolution we need is to love God and to love our neighbor. When this is our resolve, we will be satisfied with each day. Sing Psalter 282.

January 2 Read Psalm 27:1-6

Reread verse one again. After reading that, what more do we need? There is nothing we can fear in this life. Oh, there are times that we are afraid of something around us. This may be because of our own weaknesses or because of others, but when we remember that God is with us, we really do not need to be afraid. This was David's confession. Do any of us have cares more pressing than David? Many of God's people have often read this Psalm for comfort. Young people, make this one of your safety nets. Sing Psalter 71.

January 3 Read Psalm 27:7-10

Prayer is an important part of the life of the child of God. We must pray every day. We can pray because we know that he will answer us. God will not hide his face from us. He will care for us at all times. He is the God of our salvation. Of that we may be sure. We do not even have to fear being forsaken even by those who love us in an earthly sense. Jehovah is with us. Make this your hope; make this your prayer. Sing Psalter 74.

January 4 Read Psalm 27:11-14

These are beautiful words that end this short Psalm. First of all we asked to be taught. This is not easy for us to do. We want to teach but not be taught. We must learn to wait on Jehovah our covenant God. We so often want to run ahead of him. We want things to happen our way and in our time. If we wait, we will be of good courage. This courage does not come from within us; this courage comes from him alone. He

will give us the courage and strengthen our hearts to face what ever he brings on our path. Wait on the Lord. Sing Psalter 72.