



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 13, 2016

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 85

- 1 LORD, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- 2 You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.
- 3 You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.
- 4 Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us.
- 5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
- 6 Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?
- 7 Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.
- 8 Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
- 9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
- 11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
- 12 The LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
- 13 Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

DEVOTIONAL

Old Testament scholar James May points out a striking feature of Psalm 85: The psalm begins by testifying to God's already finished saving work; it sings of a fait accompli—God's salvation is a done deal. Then the situation changes: "Restore us again," the psalmist pleads. "Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you?" God's salvation is a done deal, and yet the people are still awaiting it.

Christians reading this psalm in Advent can relate. We look back to God's accomplished salvation in Christ—it's a done deal. And yet we look around and see a world still broken—sin has not been vanquished, shalom does not yet prevail. In Advent, we look forward to the time when God will make clear and complete what is already finished in Christ, when "faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from on high"—in other words, when God's kingdom of peace will fill all.

PRAYER

Loving God, who through your Son Jesus Christ brought your kingdom to earth, in this season of Advent give us patience as we wait for your often-hidden kingdom to burst forth from the ground and rain down from the sky, until righteousness and peace fill all things. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Rev. Dr. L. Roger Owens, Associate Professor of Leadership and Ministry

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