

Advent Devotional December 12, 2024

Weekly theme: Peace

Scripture

Psalm 126

*1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.*

*2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”*

*3 The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.*

*4 Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.*

*5 May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.*

*6 Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.*

Devotion

The Rev. Jelty Ochotan '11

In the world we live in, nothing comes easily. National independence is not achieved without enduring struggles, sacrifices of time, separation from family and friends, bloodshed, death, and the tears of fighters. Similarly, no student earns an A+ without hard work—sacrificing time for reading, doing homework, field studies, extracurricular activities, volunteering, and maintaining punctuality in class. Every endeavor requires full effort to attain the desired results.

The journey of the Israelites during the exile, marked by alternating hardships and blessings, illustrates that even in times of hunger, the people were provided for, demonstrating God's continuous care, which brought them joy. However, facing difficulties such as hunger and thirst in the hot desert was a test of their faithfulness to the Lord. During such trials, they often felt abandoned by God, leading to grumbling and rebellion.

This life process teaches us that spiritual maturity is not achieved easily. One must possess strong faith in God's help. The psalmist's imagery of sowing with tears symbolizes hard effort and deep trust in God's help. Tears represent profound sorrow and the inability to overcome challenges without surrendering to God's help and love. The ability to work hard is seen as a divine gift, leading to the joyful reaping of the fruits of one's labor. This joyful return follows a period of sorrow and hardship.

If people rely solely on their own abilities without depending on God, they will miss the true meaning of life and the profound joy found in God. Amen.

Prayer

God who gives joy and peace, we thank you for allowing us to experience sadness, suffering, and sacrifice. Through these trials, we understand that true joy and peace come from facing suffering with faith. We are grateful for the strength You provide in times of difficulty, enabling us to attain perfect salvation in You. Amen.