

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2021

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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 6, 2021

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 145

- 1 I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
- 2 Every day I will bless you,
and praise your name forever and ever.
- 3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation shall laud your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.
- 5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
- 6 The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed,
and I will declare your greatness.
- 7 They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness,
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
- 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- 9 The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.
- 10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
and all your faithful shall bless you.

- 11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,
and tell of your power,
- 12 to make known to all people your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
- The Lord is faithful in all his words,
and gracious in all his deeds.
- 14 The Lord upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down.
- 15 The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
- 16 You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing.
- 17 The Lord is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.
- 18 The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
- 19 He fulfills the desire of all who fear him;
he also hears their cry, and saves them.
- 20 The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.
- 21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,
and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Jeff Eddings '08

Life often confronts us with challenging relational situations that immediately recall in us some form of response. Depending on the nature of the conflict, those responses can stir in us a multitude of feelings. Anger or frustration at someone who has wronged us. Guilt or anxiety over ways we may have wronged others. Often the first response in such a scenario is anything but compassion. But what if we were able to make compassion the first response instead of the last?

When Jesus was approached by the hungry multitudes after a long and tiring day, his first response was not to send them away (as the disciples suggested!), nor was it to get angry at their unending demands. His first response was compassion. "He saw a great crowd; and he had compassion on them" (Mark 6:34).

The psalm says "the Lord has compassion over all that he has made." The incarnation is the compassionate response of God to a world that is often in conflict with God's love and purpose for God's creation. It is God's first response to us and not the last!

So in this season of incarnational compassion, let our first response also be one of compassion. Whatever the challenge or conflict, can we first respond to our friend or sibling with compassion? Can we respond compassionately to ourselves when we know we have failed or fallen short of the love required of us? This Advent season, let us follow Jesus more closely by letting our first response be one of compassion.

PRAYER

Gracious God, may we celebrate who we are as we celebrate who you are this Advent season. Thank you for the compassion that comes to us through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. May compassion be our first response to ourselves, others, and all that happens in the world around us as we seek to follow you this Christmas season.

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