

Sermon

God Meets Us In Our Fear

A Sermon for Cary Presbyterian Church

Sunday, December 4, 2022

Second Sunday in Advent.

- Is. 11:1 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.*
- 2 The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*
- 3 His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.*

- He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;*
- 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.*
- 5 Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.*
- 6 The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.*
- 7 The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*
- 8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.*
- 9 They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.*

10 On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."a 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

I. What a scene!

A. Mary and Martha grieving.

B. Friends gathered to assist in the season of mourning

*In her stunning memoir, author Cole Arthur Riley weaves together generational stories with spiritual meditations on belonging, dignity, and liberation. In chapter 7 titled, "Fear," she writes: "I believe fear has the holy potential to draw out awe in us. To lead us into deeper patterns of protection and trust. To mold us into people engaged in the unknown, capable of making mystery of it instead of terror." (pg. 86 *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories that make us*)*