

Monday, December 12, 2011

Psalm 125
1 Kings 18:1-18
Ephesians 6:10-17

**“Those who trust in the LORD are like
Mount Zion,
which can never be moved, but abides
forever.**

**As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the
LORD surrounds his people,
from this time on and forevermore.”**

Psalm 125:1-2



Some of the best memories of my years as a dorm student at Menaul and Allison-James mid-school were evening vespers and chapel services during the Christmas season. The Christmas carols we sang and scriptures we read, set patterns for us for life. The fellowship we shared as dorm students was invaluable, for we learned to respect, accept, and live with others who came from different backgrounds. The church missionaries, who were our teachers or dorm parents, were very dedicated and enabled so many of the students to succeed in school and prepared them for college or for successful careers. Because of their concern for young people from Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado, many alumni have become leaders in their communities, churches, and schools. Over 100 years later, since these mission schools started, we can still see the impact that was made.

As dorm students, we were only able to go home once during the school year, which was at Christmas. The Advent Season meant that we would soon be celebrating Christmas with our families and be able to share our home away from home experiences.

As we grow in our spiritual life, through involvement in our church, family relationships and helping those in need, we pray that we do not lose our sense of self, but come to see ourselves most clearly in our sharing of the life of Christ through our deeds. Advent is a good time to ask ourselves just how much we really believe in the promises of the Gospel. Furthermore, how much do our actions reflect what we really believe?

Lord Jesus, As we begin to celebrate you coming into the world, help us to cherish the good things of life as we look forward to you coming among us again, and ask for patience and trust when things don't turn out the way we think they should. Amen

Mrs. Dorothy Romero, Menaul School Class of 1955

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Psalm 125

2 Kings 2:9-22

Acts 3:17—4:4

They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed but abideth forever.

Psalm 125:1

God's everlasting love is something that far too many people take for granted. We all need to realize that the Lord has given us free will as a gift and is expecting us to take the correct path toward righteousness throughout our own decisions. In everyone's journey, they will come to definite crossroads that force them to make a decision, usually an ethical or moral choice. As the Bible verse states, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." The meaning behind these words is that as we approach those crossroads, there is no need to stress out and worry, but to leave the situation completely in the Lord's hands and he will forever take care of you. God loves all of his children, humanity, therefore those that trust in him completely and live their lives through a godly heart, they will be taken care of. Those who believe in Jesus Christ as their savior and have taken God into their hearts will have eternal life and will forever feel the love of God.



The Christmas season is always a time for me to reflect and realize how truly fortunate I am to be able to live the life I do. Whenever the times begin to get hard, whether it be during a difficult test, or when it's time for that final push on the football field, I know I can trust in God to help me every single step until I reach victory. God's loving embrace will never leave mine, nor any others who can fully rely on him when the going gets tough or even when life seems easy. Just always remember to give thanks to Him, for his love will never leave us and he will never lead us into a situation we can't handle.

Dear God, we pray that you will help guide us this holiday season while we enjoy the company of our family and friends. Please be with those who are less fortunate and be in their hearts. Amen.

Dennis Smatana, Menaul Senior Class of 2012

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Psalm 125

Malachi 3:16—4:6

Mark 9:9-13

As a child I grew up in a home that nurtured the idea of the all and ever present God.

I always felt secure in the thought that God was always with me. I felt special and part of something larger than myself. My history with God's promise of His Presence has always brought me great comfort and strength.

As I have aged, I have realized that God's promise to me, and all humankind, is that He is there for us if we accept and trust Him and embrace His love and protection. He will make us strong against any obstacles we may face.



***“Those who trust in the Lord
are like Mount Zion, which cannot be
moved, but abides forever.
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem
So the Lord is round about his people,
From this time forth and for evermore.”*** Psalm 125:1-2

God's presence with Israel in the wilderness and the Temple foreshadowed the coming of the Messiah. For me, there is no greater testament to God's promise of "God with us" than the birth of the Christ child.

The Incarnation is an integral part of the major biblical theme of God's desire and promise to be in close fellowship with us. The Christmas Story does not begin with a birth in Bethlehem, but rather it starts with the eternalness of God.

Jesus is God come to us in the flesh. The birth of Christ is God's promise to always be with us.

My mother would always say, "God is Love, but Christ is the Hope that God's Love will be Present and Everlasting.

In the midst of the holiday season, let us remember that we need to include Jesus in our preparations. Christmas comes "but once a year", but Christ's birth reminds us that God's love is always and forever with us. Christ's birth is our reminder that God counts on us to share His love with others.

Maria Cordova Andrews, Counselor at Menaul School

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
2 Samuel 6:1-11
Hebrews 1:1-4

“How can the ark of the LORD come into my care?”

2 Samuel 6:9



I remember one Christmas, many years ago, when all I wanted was a bike. All of my friends had bikes, and everyone was getting to the park or a neighbor's house faster than me and I had to make everyone wait for me. My friends looked so cool and very accomplished because of their bikes. For Christmas I asked only for a bike – and my wish came true! I finally had this new gift that no doubt enlightened everybody around me. It was December and we didn't care how cold it was. My friends and I rode our bikes in the snow and even on the ice.

A few days after I received my bike, one of my friends tried to show off and his bike slipped on black ice and he got really badly hurt. The rest of us didn't ride our bikes from then on. After a while we realized that without them we couldn't do the stuff that we had done before. We couldn't ride to a neighbor who lived miles away or save time going places that weren't close to us. Then in the spring, I saw my friends once again riding their bikes. I again thought of what had happened to my friend in the winter and realized that what can hurt us can also help us.

In 2 Samuel we read that David was in charge of moving the Ark of the Covenant. It was in the house of a man named Abinadab and was to be moved to Jerusalem. Abinadab's sons were carrying the ark to the city when the ark was moved by the oxen. Uzzah, one of the sons, put his hand on the ark because it was shaken. Then the anger of the Lord was against Uzzah, and the Lord struck him for touching the ark. Uzzah died next to the ark of the Lord. David, hearing this, was frightened and moved the ark into another house instead of his. The man of the house was Obed-edom, who held it for three months. Because of this the Lord blessed him and his household.

The power of God was in the Ark, which contained the Law, God's gift to his people. But maybe people started to forget that the Ark was much more than something to make the Israelites look cool and accomplished to their neighbors. The gift had real power. What was a benefit could also be dangerous if not treated with respect.

Around Christmas time, we say that we will follow the true meaning of Christmas, but we get distracted by other things. We need to realize that giving and receiving presents may be great but that our true gift is God's son. We can blindly forget the real power of this gift and not respect him, even run away from him. But God always gives us many chances so we can get back on that bike and be true to him.

Lord, may we always remember that you have become involved in the world to help us when we fall to get back up from our blind mistakes. Amen.

Luis Santiago, Class of 2014

Friday, December 16, 2011

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Hebrews 1: 5-14

Lamentations 3: 22-24

*The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still
continue,
Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise.
The Lord is all I have, and so I put my hope in
the Lord.*

Lamentations 3:22-24



Winter is coming; days are shorter with less sunshine; trees are bare; and flowers are dead. At this time of year many people easily become depressed. Yet the Advent season, the time of preparation for Christmas, reminds us of the never ending love and hope we receive from God.

Several years ago we ran a bed & breakfast in rural West Virginia. This place was special because all of our guests came to our small, isolated town to visit family or friends serving sentences at the nearby federal women's prison. Some of our guests came only once or twice, but we became close friends with many who visited more frequently.

When we told others where we were and what we were doing, they thought it must be a very depressing experience. On the contrary, we felt so much love and hope among our extended guest family. It was a place of comfort and acceptance, as they shared their experiences and their hope for when their loved ones would return home.

Christmas was very special at the house. On Christmas Eve we all gathered in the large living room (we usually had forty to fifty guests during the holidays). The lights on the tree were twinkling and the children helped light the Advent wreath. Through the generosity of many supporters, we had presents for all the children. We also feasted with a meal that everyone helped prepare. The scene was like that in many homes everywhere, except for the common concern for loved ones nearby, with whom they could only share a few visiting hours.

One guest, who came with her grandson to visit her daughter regularly, thanked us profusely for "helping her get through the worst time in her life." After we had moved from West Virginia, we reflected on the experience, and realized that in this one place, we had managed to cover the entire list of things Jesus said we should do:

We fed the hungry;

We gave the thirsty something to drink;

We welcomed the stranger;

We gave clothing to guests in need, since some arrived without clothing appropriate for prison visitation;

We tended sick guests, with aspirin and Band-Aids; and

We visited and helped our guests visit prisoners.

May this season of never ending love and hope, inspire us to care for all our neighbors, as we care for ourselves.

Phil and Joan Taylor, Volunteers in Mission

Saturday, December 17, 2011

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Judges 13:2-24

John 7:40-52

I will sing of the mercy and loving-kindness of the Lord forever; with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness from generation to generation. For I have said, Mercy and loving-kindness shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness will You establish in the very heavens, unchangeable and perpetual. You have said, I have made a covenant with My chosen one, I have sworn to David My servant, Your Seed I will establish forever, and I will build up your throne for all generations. Pause and calmly think of that!....[and] he shall cry to Me, You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation! Psalm 89: 1-4, 26

As I reflect on the passage from Psalm 89, I cannot help but be aware that indeed God's mercy and loving-kindness are forever. And, as we journey through this advent season, and prepare ourselves to celebrate the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot help but raise our voices in praise to God for the faithfulness with which God has graced our lives and the perfect love shown to us in the fulfillment of God's promise to David that God would establish David's descendants forever and through that perfect descendant, our Lord Jesus Christ, established the very rock of our salvation.

Often, in trying times, we lose sight of the fact that God is with us, Emmanuel, always and forever. I know that in my own life, I have experienced that loving kindness and faithfulness often and quite tangibly. Not too long ago I was diagnosed with cancer, a cancer that almost certainly meant my imminent death. Yet I knew that God would be with me and God would



enable me to walk into and perhaps through the valley of the shadow of death. And so I went into the valley, unafraid and secure in the knowledge that Great is God's faithfulness. And now having lived through that journey I will sing of the mercy and loving-kindness which was made real and tangible with the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, O so many centuries ago.

So, let us all sing of God's ever-faithful mercy and loving-

kindness as we journey through this Advent Season and as we deal with the uncertainties of life beyond the manger. Let us proclaim now and always, Emmanuel, God with us!

Elder Conrad M. Rocha, Interim Synod Executive/Stated Clerk, Synod of the Southwest, Menaul Trustee

**Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 18, 2011**

**2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38**



**“My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him;
and in my name shall his horn be exalted.”**

Psalm 89:24

In humility does the Lord come. He comes in a humility borne with the resplendent joy of the advent of reconciliation, a humility made even more pronounced as He is born in a rough-hewn manger of hay and stubble. Such an act of lowliness from Him Who is the beginning and the end of all existence and faith, of love and mercy, has inspired the works of renowned poets, writers, artists, and musicians. Each has glimpsed the Wonder of His Being. The author of Psalm 89 saw that Wonder, and his spirit could not contain its fullness. And to proclaim the magnitude of God, the Holy One of Israel, he channels the Words of the Most High: “But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted” (verse 24). By those words, the psalmist reveals the profound truth of the ages: God, the One by Whom all things exist, has chosen to abide faithfully not only with David, the subject of the Psalm, but also with us his adopted sons and daughters who believe in Him, to offer His Mercy and Himself as resurgent gifts to ensure our communion with Him. This magnanimity is made possible through His imputed righteousness—a righteousness clothed in the fragile, vulnerable flesh of an infant.

And this wondrous truth is made even more ineffably profound by the psalmist’s extended vision: the Lord shall fortify our strength by His Name. As a loving earthly father gives his name to his children, so, too, does our Heavenly Father bestow us with His Identity, with His Grace, with His Authority. Here at Menaul School we are privileged to have many Native American students in our fold. One of their endearing traditions is to name each child with a private name that reflects the character or trait of, or hope for, that individual. Similarly, our Father of Lights writes upon our foreheads the new name of the One Whom we await at this season with exultant joy and singing. He infuses within us a new identity, sparkling with His traits of compassion and goodness. Such a name is made possible by the Crimson Cleansing willingly offered by a child enrobed in swaddling clothes. And so we await, we anticipate, we long for the Promise of the Father, the Promise that seals us for future glory, the Promise resting meekly in a crib of rustic wood. Hallelujah!

Our Father, we love You. We love You because while we were yet alienated from You because of our sin, You loved us. Help us to love You and others more intimately with that Love You expressed through Your Son Who humbly gave us the gift of Himself so that we may rest on Your Bosom and call You “Abba.”



Richard Lucero, Upper School English Teacher at Menaul School