

The Fourth Sunday of Advent – The Angels’ Candle

As you light the first candle explain, “The first candle we light is The Prophet’s Candle and it reminds us that the coming of Jesus was foretold hundreds of years before His birth.”

As you light the second candle explain, “The second candle we light is The Bethlehem Candle and it reminds us that Jesus was born in a humble fashion as a servant.”

As you light the third candle explain, “The third candle we light is The Shepherds’ Candle and it reminds us that the birth of Jesus was first announced to the humble shepherds.”

As you light the fourth candle explain, “The fourth candle we light is The Angels’ Candle and it reminds us that the birth of Jesus was good news of great joy for all people.”

Consider: The Greek word that we get our English word “angel” from means messenger. In the scripture angels often appear to make sure that people understand the point of some great work that God is about to do. In many regards they give a sort of insight and explanation into what God is doing through a particular situation. During the birth of Jesus we see angels helping Mary understand that she is going to have a child, helping Joseph understand that the child is from God and that the child in Mary’s womb is a miracle of the Holy Spirit, and announcing to the shepherds that Jesus birth had taken place in Bethlehem. In each case we see the angel telling us a little more about who this child really was. Let’s read together and listen for the explanation the angel gives about Jesus.

Read the Bible: *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-35 ESV)

Here we see that the angel told Mary that Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to King David of a kingdom that would never end, He is the Son of the Most High, the holy Son of God. But an angel also appears to Joseph.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:18-21 ESV)

Here we see that the angel told Joseph that the child being born would "save his people from their sins." Did you know that the name Jesus means Savior? Then on the night Jesus was born when the angels announced his birth to the shepherds, do you remember what they said?

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10-12 ESV)

Remember: If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you really needed help but could not help yourself then you know how great it is for someone to sweep in and save the day. It is really good news when you hear that help has arrived. This is the way the angels talked about Jesus, the promise has been fulfilled, God has reached down to man in his sinfulness and through Jesus Christ is lifting them up to share in His joy. The message that Jesus came to save people who are helpless sinners is still good news today to all those who have recognized their need for a savior. What the angels proclaimed is true, there is great joy when you know that you put your hope in Christ and this joyful offer is proclaimed to all people, even you.

Pray: Thank you for reaching down to us through Christ and giving us hope in any situation that we find ourselves in. Help us to humble ourselves and see our need for you so that our hearts will be prepared to receive the offer of sharing in your joy.

Experience the Joy: Each week you can take the opportunity to make your Christmas meaningful by doing something practical to share and experience the joy of Christmas. During this week, the project is called Meet A Need.

Every year during the Christmas season there are people around us that are going through difficulties for all sorts of reasons. It can be easy for us to be overwhelmed and turn a blind eye to those around us that are in the same situation we are in this year. There are people going through major life transitions, financial difficulties, medical problems, and all sorts of other disappointments.

During this week think about someone around that may have significant needs in their life at this time and determine to do something to help. But here is the catch. Find a way to help them that will assure that you do not get any of the recognition. If you are having trouble coming up with something specific, reach out to one of your Pastors, a School Counselor in your community or someone else that may be in a position to see needs better than you do. Either way set aside some of your time and resources and celebrate the gift of Jesus and meet a need.

Daily Reading: Use the daily readings each week to guide you through scriptures related to Advent and the weekly theme.

Week 4: (Monday – Friday)

Monday - Luke 1:39-56

Tuesday - Luke 1:57-80

Wednesday - Luke 2:1-7

Thursday - Luke 2:8-21

Friday - Luke 2:22-38