



those who fear him in ev'ry generation.

He has shown the strength of His Arm; He has scattered the

proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty

from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich

he has sent away empty. He has come to the

help of His servant Israel, for He has remembered His

promise of mercy, the promise made to our fathers,

to Abraham, and to His children forever. Amen

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy Spirit. C: Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS *P: Dearly beloved! We have come together in the presence of God our heavenly Father, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at His hand, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His holy Word, and to ask for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and salvation. O come, let us worship Him! Let us kneel and bow down before Him. Let us confess our sins with penitent hearts, and obtain forgiveness by His infinite grace and mercy.*

C: Almighty and most merciful Father, we have strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed the devices and desires of our hearts. We have offended against Your holy Law. We have done those things which we should not have done, and we have not done those things which we should have done. Have mercy on us, O Lord! Spare us and restore us, according to the promises You have declared to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord. For His sake grant that we may live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of Your holy Name.

THE ABSOLUTION

P: The almighty and merciful Lord has granted us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins, grace for true repentance and amendment of life, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

OPENING HYMN: "Behold, A Branch Is Growing" ELH #121 5 verses

1. Behold a branch is growing - Of loveliest form and grace,
As prophets sung, fore-knowing; - It springs from Jesse's race
And bears one little Flow'r
In midst of coldest winter, - At deepest midnight hour.
2. Isaiah hath foretold It - In words of promise sure,
And Mary' s arms enfold It, - A Virgin meek and pure.
Through God's eternal will
This Child to her is given - At midnight calm and still.
3. The shepherds heard the story, - Proclaimed by angels bright,
How Christ, the Lord of Glory, - Was born on earth this night.
To Bethlehem they sped
And in the manger found him, - As angel heralds said.
4. This Flow'r, whose fragrance tender - With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor - The darkness everywhere.
True Man, yet very God;
From sin and death He saves us - And lightens every load.
5. O Saviour, Child of Mary, - Who felt our human woe;
Savior, King of Glory. - Who dost our weakness know,
Bring us at length, we pray.
To the bright courts of heaven - And to the endless day.

The VERSICLES

ELH, p.120

P: ♪ O Lord, open my lips. C: ♪ And my mouth will show forth Your praise.

P: ♪ Make haste, O God, to deliver me. C: ♪ Make haste to help me, O Lord.

The GLORIA PATRI

C: ♪ Glory be to the Father, and to the

Son, and- to- the Holy Ghost. - As it was in the beginning; is now, and ever shall be, for-ev-er-more. - A-men. Al-le-lu—ia!

LECTION: SCRIPTURE LESSONS for ADVENT-1 *“JESUS OF EGYPT”*

OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 11:1-5 “A shoot will come up from...Jesse...”

GOSPEL Matthew 2:19-23 “After Herod died, the angel of the Lord...”

RESPONSORY *P: ♪ O Lord, have mercy upon us. C: ♪ Thanks be to You, O Lord!*

HYMN: “O How Shall I Receive Thee” *ELH #94 Sing verses 6-8*

6. Rejoice, then, ye sad-hearted. - Who sit in deepest gloom.
Who mourn o'er joys departed, - And tremble at your doom;
Despair not, He is near you, - Yea, standing at the door,
Who best can help and cheer you, - And bid you weep no more.

7. No care nor effort either - Is needed day or night,
How ye may draw Him hither - In your own strength and might.
He comes, He comes with gladness, - Moved by His love alone,
To calm your fear and sadness, - To Him they are well known.

8. Sin's debt, that fearful burden, - Let not your souls distress;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon - And cover by His grace.
He comes, He comes procuring - The peace of sin forgiven,
For all God's sons securing - Their heritage in heaven.

THIRD HYMN “I Am So Glad When Christmas Comes” *ELH #127 6 verses*

1. I am so glad- when Christmas comes, The night of Je-sus birth,
When Beth'lem's star- shone as the sun And angels sang- with mirth.

2. The little Child- of Bethlehem, The King of heavenly grace,
Came down from His- exalted throne To save our fallen race.

3. He's now returned- to heav'n above, God's Son He is- always;
He ne'er forgets- His little ones But hears them when- they pray.

4. I too would sing- my Saviour's praise, My Joy, my Crown-, my Lord;
For He has made- me His own child By Water and- the Word.

5. I love this pre-cious Christmas-time And my dear Sav-iour mild,
And I shall not- forget the truth: He loves me as- His child.

6. I AM SO GLAD- WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES, LET ANTHEMS FILL- THE AIR!
HE OPENS WIDE- FOR EV'RY CHILD HIS PARADISE- SO FAIR.

The VERSICLE *P: ♪ Let my prayers rise before you as incense:*

C: ♪ And the lifting up of my hands - As the ev'ning sacrifice.

The MAGNIFICAT *(Song of Mary) words and music at end of bulletin →*

KYRIE ELEISON *(Lord Have Mercy) C: ♪ Lord, have mercy upon us. - Christ, have mercy upon us. - Lord, have mercy upon us.*

The LORD'S PRAYER *All (chant)pray together (chant tone on p.125)*

*C: ♪ Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name;
Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread,
and Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;
For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory;
forever and ever. A- -men.*

The (Evening) COLLECT *(Pastor prays, Congregation Amen) C: ♪ A- -men.*

The BENEDICAMUS *P: ♪ Let us bless the Lord. C: ♪ Thanks be to God.*

The BENEDICTION *P: ♪ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God,
And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. C: ♪ A- -men.*

CLOSING HYMN *Abide With Me ELH #561 Sing verses 1, 5, 6 EVENTIDE*

1. Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide; The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!

5. Thou on my head in every youth didst smile, And though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee. On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.

6. I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour; What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me!

Silent Prayer *(Candles out.) You may be seated.*

FELLOWSHIP

♪ **“Magnificat”** *(Song of Mary) ♪ Please sing along! ♪*

C: ♪ My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; My spirit re-

joices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor

on his lowly servant. From this day all generations

will call me blessed. The Almighty has done great

things for me, and holy is His Name. He has mercy on

ADVENT-3 MIDWEEK "O HOW SHALL I RECEIVE THEE(3)" 12.18.13 OS

**6. Rejoice, then, ye sad-hearted. - Who sit in deepest gloom.
Who mourn o'er joys departed, - And tremble at your doom;
Despair not, He is near you, - Yea, standing at the door,
Who best can help and cheer you, - And bid you weep no more.**

PRAYER: Grant us grace to pass the time of our sojourning here in daily watchfulness, prayer and faith, ever looking for, and hastening to the day of Your second coming, when You shall appear again in the clouds of heaven, with all Your holy angels. Let not that day surprise us in unbelief and sin, but by Your grace enable us with all Your saints to lift up our heads in joy, and behold the fullness of our redemption. Hear us, O eternal Son of the Father, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forevermore. Amen.

FELLOW REDEEMED: The sixth stanza begins *"Rejoice then, ye sad-hearted, who sit in deepest gloom. Who mourn over joys departed, and tremble at your doom."* - **Excuse me? "Rejoice"?! Just how do you manage that when you are, as Paul Gerhardt writes "sad-hearted" in "deepest gloom", are mourning over lost joys, and even trembling at your doom???** How can he write that? How can we sing that? Isn't this all a bunch of contradictory nonsense? "Rejoice"? Really?

Yes. Really. Oh, it's not that your problems aren't real. It's not that you don't have plenty of reason to be sad, gloomy, mourning, and trembling over what's coming next. But there is **something BIGGER** afoot which, if you know it, pulls the rug out from under all of that.

There once was a young student finishing up high school who took a series of exams, which, if she did well enough, could result in automatic credit for a number of college courses. She got the results, and submitted them to the college she was going to eventually attend, but first she enrolled at a community college to save money for a year. After a couple of months she received a letter telling her that she was going to be admitted to the school where she would complete her Bachelor of Science, and they included a list of the courses she'd be given credit for on the basis of those tests. It dawned on her that the one course that was taking up a lot of her time because of lab requirements was one that she was already credited with passing!

It was too late in the term to withdraw, so she simply stopped going to class, unless there was something she wanted to show up for. A few weeks later the instructor pulled her aside and was really concerned because she was failing his course, and he knew that she was able to do a lot better. Now, if she only knew what he was telling her, she would have been really worried. But she wasn't. Other than feeling bad because the guy really cared about her performance, she knew that she didn't have anything to worry about. She wasn't getting an 'F' in astronomy, but

an 'A' as far as the school she would enter the next year was concerned. In light of her performance in that class, she was flunking, and should have been pretty down-hearted, gloomy, and trembling at her academic doom. But **in light of what had already been accepted, she knew that she had nothing to worry about at all.** She told the professor what was going on, and he and she spent the rest of the term **happily earning an 'F' that would never matter.**

You and I have a greater truth than what meets the eye when it comes to sin and death. Looking at what Jesus has already done, taking your place under the Law, and dying to pay the penalty of your sin, and defeating death in dying and Rising in your place, your eternal home in God's blessed presence is already won for you. The gloomy, teary, sad-making reality of what this life brings has had all of it's anguish pulled out from under it. You are a dying sinner to be sure, but you are already redeemed and given eternal life for Jesus' sake, and that gives you all the reason you need to rejoice even in the midst of sorrow.

Christmas is coming (exactly one week away), **and you have real reason to celebrate**, for God has become man, born of the Virgin, and has paid your admission to eternity. The rest of the world may mourn its dreadful dying condition in sin, but **you are redeemed**, and when Jesus returns on the Last Day, you shall be His joy and delight, raised from this mortal condition to immortality, from this corruption into eternal perfection, and from this tear stained life into that life which shall never end. Jesus is coming soon, and He brings great joy with him. He comes to wipe your tears away, and to give you His salvation. Hear the words that follow in the next stanza (7):

**7. No care nor effort either - Is needed day or night,
How ye may draw Him hither - In your own strength and might.
He comes, He comes with gladness, - Moved by His love alone,
To calm your fear and sadness, - To Him they are well known.**

CONCLUSION (FOR 3-PART SERIES) So, in the end, *"O how shall I receive Thee" (?)* – How should we receive our coming Savior at Christmas? How do we meet this **Newborn in Bethlehem?** How do we travel with this **Infant to Egypt?** And, how do we grow with this **Child of Nazareth?** In our three short studies this Advent seaSON, we have seen that we receive our King: 1) **not by** our own works or merits, but **purely by His** divine Grace and Mercy, 2) we receive Him as the (only) One Who **releases us** from the bondage of sin and the Devil to **the freedom of Forgiveness, Life and Salvation**, and finally (tonight) 3) we receive Him with **Joy in our hearts** as the One Who wipes away all our tears.

Jesus loves you. You are forgiven. You are going to live forever.
IJ'N, Amen. SDG