



December 25-31, 2016

Text: *Matt 1:22-23,28:20; John 1:14*

ADVENT THEME: Advent Choices

1st Sunday of Advent: *Preparers or Preventers*

2nd Sunday of Advent: *Faith; not Fear*

3rd Sunday of Advent: *Hope; not Despair*

4th Sunday of Advent: *Process; not Perfection*

Christmas Day: *Presents or Presence?*

SUMMARY OF SERMON: It is an amazing miracle of God that human beings, separated from God by their sin, can be restored to God's presence through Jesus Christ. He is Immanuel, God with us – and *always* with us. When we put our faith in Jesus and are born again the Holy Spirit dwells within us making God's presence real to us.

RELATED BIBLE PASSAGES FOR THE COMING WEEK [The Bible readings this week are related to the concept of God's presence.]

Monday, Dec. 26 – **John 1:1-14** [For the Word to become flesh in the Incarnation paves the way for humans, separated them from God's presence, to be brought back into God's presence through faith in Jesus Christ, who manifests the glory, grace, and truth of God.]

Tuesday, Dec. 27 – **John 14:15-27** [It is through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God that followers of Christ are able to experience God's presence. It is the Holy Spirit's witness in our hearts that make the reality of the invisible Father and Son real to the believer.]

Wednesday, Dec. 28 – **Exodus 33:12-23** [After Israel's grievous sin of worshipping an idol (Golden Calf) God has threatened to not go with them. Moses pleads as an intercessor for the Presence of God, knowing that life's journey is fruitless apart from God's presence.]

Thursday, Dec. 29 – **Psalms 89** [This psalm begins with praise to God for His past faithfulness yet ends with a cry for help since it seems that God has rejected His people. At the heart of the psalm, though, is a wonderful set of verses – vv.14-16, that call us to learn to acclaim the Lord and be blessed as we walk in the light of His presence.]

Friday, Dec. 30 – **I Corinthians 3:10-17** [In countering the Corinthian church's factions, Paul reminds them that they are all one in Christ and need to build together on that foundation. Furthermore, the Christian community (v.16) is the temple of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, manifesting God's presence.]

Saturday, Dec. 31 – **Proverbs 1:20-33** [When God's wisdom is rejected, as depicted here, there are serious consequences. Among these are a lack of any sense of God's presence, v.28, in times of great challenge.]



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