

Passion

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Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 3:1-6

Psalm 19:14

Lord, may we each hear the message
today the we each need to hear for our
own faith walk.

and

May these words of my mouth and this
meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

- Amen

Key Scriptures For Today

- Malachi 3 - The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight--indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.
- Luke 3:4 - as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."

Malachi 3

- Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, was written during a time when the Israelites had returned from Babylonian exile and had reestablished themselves in their land.
- The people of Israel were experiencing a period of economic difficulty and spiritual complacency. After returning from exile, many Israelites were struggling with poverty and uncertainty, and they felt that God was distant.

Malichai 3

- **Spiritual Apathy:** The people had grown disillusioned with God's promises. They questioned God's justice, wondering why the wicked prospered while the righteous suffered. This is evident in the broader context of Malachi (e.g., Malachi 2:17), where the people express frustration over perceived divine indifference.
- **Hope for Restoration:** Malachi 3:1-4 presents a future hope where God's coming will bring about purification and restoration. This is a promise to both the priests and the people that, after a process of judgment and refining, their worship will be restored, and their offerings will once again be pleasing to God.

Malichai 3

- **Purification and Refining:** The theme of purification emphasizes that God will bring judgment, but also restoration. Just as precious metals are refined, so too will God's people be refined through hardship and divine intervention.
- **God's Justice and Faithfulness:** The passage assures the people that God is still faithful to His covenant and will act to restore justice. Despite the seeming prosperity of the wicked, God will act to set things right.
- **The Coming of the Messiah:** The reference to a "messenger" and "the Lord" points to the future arrival of the Messiah, bringing both judgment and salvation.

Luke 3:1-6 - Prepare the Way of the Lord

- **John the Baptist's Ministry:**

- **Verses 1-2** introduce John the Baptist in the wilderness, where he is called by God to begin his ministry. John's role is to prepare the way for the Messiah, as prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 40:3-5).
- **Verse 3** says that John proclaimed a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Baptism was an act of purification, but John redefined it as a spiritual symbol for the repentance of sins and the coming of God's kingdom.
- **Verses 4-6** quote Isaiah's prophecy about the forerunner who will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. This is a significant moment, as it connects the message of John the Baptist to the fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

Luke 3 - John's Message of Repentance:

- John warning the crowds of the wrath to come. He calls them to produce "fruits in keeping with repentance," meaning that true repentance is not just a verbal declaration but should lead to tangible changes in behavior.
- John criticizes the false reliance on being descendants of Abraham, emphasizing that God can raise up children of Abraham from stones.

Luke 3 - John's Message of Repentance:

- Expands on the theme of repentance with practical advice: share with those in need, be honest in business, and practice justice.
- These ethical teachings highlight the social dimension of repentance: it is not only about individual forgiveness but also about societal transformation, especially regarding the poor and oppressed.

Luke 3 - Key Themes and Ideas

- **Repentance and Transformation:**
 - John calls the people to a life of repentance, not just for personal salvation but for social transformation.
 - True repentance involves changing how one relates to others, especially the poor and marginalized. It requires turning away from unjust practices and living according to God's will.

Luke 3 - Key Themes and Ideas

- **Mercy:**

- The themes of justice, mercy, and ethical behavior are central to John's message.
- His teachings address economic inequality and exploitation, emphasizing the need for social and moral reforms. John's call for ethical action highlights the connection between spirituality and social responsibility.

Luke 3 - Key Themes and Ideas

- **The Coming of the Messiah:**
 - John the Baptist points to Jesus as the one who will bring the ultimate transformation.
 - He clarifies that while he baptizes with water, Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire, signaling a deeper and more lasting work of salvation and judgment.

Luke 3 - Key Themes and Ideas

- **Identity of Jesus:**

- The baptism of Jesus, and the subsequent divine affirmation ("You are my Son"), solidifies Jesus' identity as the Messiah and the Son of God.
- This moment marks the public revelation of Jesus' mission and His divine approval for the work that He is about to undertake.

Passion and Faith in Advent

- Advent is a season of anticipation and reflection on Christ's first and second coming.
- *5 Key Ways to Grow Passion Through Hope*

1. Passion for Anticipation and Hope:

- Advent is a time of eager expectation for the coming of Christ. This passion is not only about preparing for a celebration but also about renewing hope in the fulfillment of God's promises. Christians reflect on both Christ's first coming as a baby in Bethlehem and anticipate His second coming in glory.
- This dual focus stirs deep passion for God's promises and faith in His continued work in the world.
- Luke 2:37, Philippians 4:6-7, Romans 12:12

2. Faith in the Incarnation:

- The faith that Christians have in the incarnation—God becoming human in the person of Jesus—is central to Advent. The passion of faith during this time is rooted in the belief that Christ, though divine, humbled Himself to live among humanity.
- This profound mystery of God's love and sacrifice is a key theme of the Advent season, as Christians prepare their hearts to celebrate the miracle of the Incarnation.
- 1 John 1:1, 1 John 4:1

3. Renewed Devotion and Prayer:

- Advent invites Christians to deepen their faith through prayer, reflection, and acts of devotion. The passion to draw closer to God during this time is expressed in lighting Advent candles, participating in special church services, reading Scripture, and engaging in acts of service.
- The season is an opportunity to rekindle or renew one's passion for God through acts of faith and worship.
- Exodus 9:29, 1 Samuel 2:1, 1 Kings 8:22

4. Live in Hope and Anticipation of Christ's Return

- Advent is not only about the first coming of Christ, but also a reminder of His promised second coming. Christians can live with a passionate hope and anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promises.
- Advent calls Christians to live in the “already” (the birth of Christ) and the “not yet” (the second coming). This dual focus on the past and future helps foster a deeper sense of longing for Christ's return and motivates Christians to live faithfully in the present.
- Christians can demonstrate passion during Advent by cultivating a spirit of eager expectation for Christ's return. This hope motivates holy living, patient endurance, and the sharing of the gospel with others as a witness to God's kingdom.

4. Live in Hope and Anticipation of Christ's Return

- **Titus 2:13:** "While we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."
- **Revelation 22:12:** "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done."

5. Cultivate a Spirit of Repentance and Renewal

- **Key:** Use the Advent season to reflect on personal sin, repent, and embrace spiritual renewal, preparing the heart for a deeper relationship with Christ.
- **Rationale:** Advent, though joyful, also serves as a time to prepare spiritually by recognizing the need for repentance. This leads to a more authentic and humble celebration of Christ's birth, centered on His saving grace.
- **Action:** Christians can take time during Advent to confess their sins, seek forgiveness, and renew their commitment to following Christ. This spiritual renewal helps to prepare them for celebrating the arrival of the Savior.

5. Cultivate a Spirit of Repentance and Renewal

- **Matthew 3:1-3:** "In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"
- **Isaiah 40:3-5:** "A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.'"
- **1 John 1:9:** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Moving Through Advent, And Beyond

- In Advent, Christians experience a season of anticipation, reflection, and preparation, marking the lead-up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Hope, Passion and faith are intricately connected during this season in profound ways.
- Advent is a season for passionate living—prayer, service, repentance, reflection on the Incarnation, and anticipation for Christ’s return.
- Let us live with passion for Christ during this sacred season.

MAY YOU GROW IN YOUR
PASSION THROUGH HOPE,
FAITH, JOY AND LOVE THIS
ADVENT SEASON.

- AMEN