

A Holy Longing

Advent 2011



⁶⁷ His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸ “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David

⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

⁷¹ salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—

⁷² to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant,

⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear

⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.



⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;

for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Luke 1 v 67-80



Advent



Monday, December 5, 2011

Things are not as they should be



The way in which newspapers, radio, and TV communicate their news to us creates an atmosphere of constant emergency. The excited voices of reporters, the predilection for gruesome accidents, cruel crimes, and perverted behavior, and the hour-to-hour coverage of human misery at home and abroad slowly engulf us with an all-pervasive sense of impending doom. On top of all this bad news is the avalanche of advertisements. Their unrelenting insistence that we will miss out on something very important if we do not read this book, see this movie, hear this speaker, or buy this new product deepens our restlessness and adds many fabricated preoccupations



to the already existing ones. Sometimes it seems as if our society has become dependant on the maintenance of these artificial worries.

Beneath our worrying lives, however, something else is going on. While our minds and hearts are filled with many things, and we wonder how we can live up to the expectations imposed upon us by ourselves and others, we have a deep sense of unfulfillment. While busy with and worrying about many things, we seldom feel truly satisfied, at peace, at home. A gnawing sense of being unfulfilled underlies our filled lives....



The great paradox of our time is that many of us are busy and bored at the same time. While running from one event to the next, we wonder in our innermost selves if anything is really happening. While we can hardly keep up with our many tasks and obligations, we are not so sure that it would make any difference if we did nothing at all. While people keep pushing us in all directions, we doubt if anyone really cares. In short, while our lives are full, we are unfulfilled.

Henri Nouwen



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REJECT PASSIVITY



And you, my child, will be called a prophet
of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to
prepare the way for him,

Luke 1



³ He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.

⁶ And all people will see God’s salvation.””

Luke 3



WAY OF THE WORLD



Monday, December 5, 2011

Idols. Inordinate affection- loving ourselves or others or things more than God, always bends us out of shape. It also introduces bends and twists into what we build. Necessary seats of power become too powerful. Necessary accumulators of capital accumulate too much. The beautiful and famous live in a dream world of lust and glamour. The world as it exists is full of these distortions. Nothing exists in its proper proportion.



Sometimes fools wear crowns, while true moral or spiritual greatness is powerless or buried in oblivion. Candles are hidden under bushes while dead bulbs are exhibited on lamp stands as though they were full of light. Mountains become valleys and valleys become peaks.

Richard Lovelace



One of the great ironies of sin is that when human beings try to become more than human beings, to be as gods, they fall to become lower than human beings. To be your own God and live for your own glory and power leads to the most bestial and cruel kind of sub-human behavior. Pride makes you a predator, not a person.

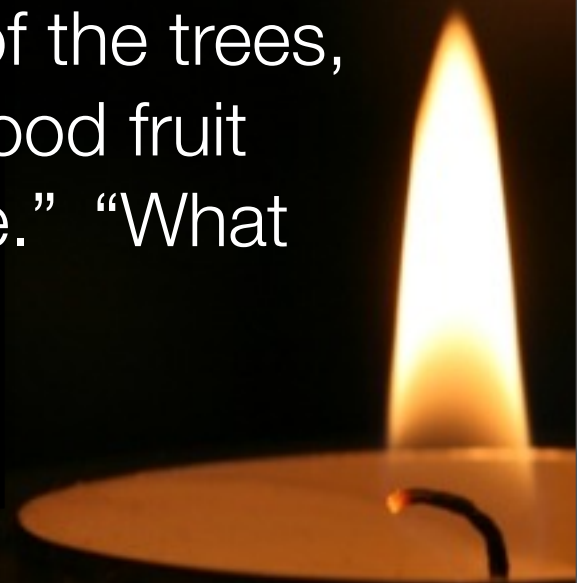
Edward P Meadors



*TEARING DOWN
RAISING UP*



John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” “What should we do then?” the crowd asked?



John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?” “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

Luke 3



WAY OF THE LORD



Monday, December 5, 2011

to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven ⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

Luke 1



*To enable us to serve Him
without fear...*



We are Forerunners



Cultivate Discontent



Recover Our Prophetic Voice



Confess and Repent



Confess and Repent
Soak the Ground with Prayer



Confess and Repent
Soak the Ground with Prayer
Stop Settling

