



THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

Daily Devotion at Zion + December 12, 2021 AD + [Advent Season](#)

Being Truly Human

Part Three: Love

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” (Genesis 2:15)

God made us for the sake of others. Adam never existed solely for himself, but for the sake of God and all the creatures in the garden where God had placed him. In time, Eve would come, too, a suitable helper in that grand calling to *work* and to *care*. That work and care on behalf of others has a name: love.

God is love (1 John 4:8), and since we are created in His image (Genesis 1:27), we were made to love as He loves us.

People have spent a great many hours and sheaves of paper trying to unpack the way of love. We struggle with love, because love is divine, even as Jacob wrestled with God by the Jabbok (Gen. 32:22-31). Yet God has shown us the way simply in His ten commandments. To live the divine life, we live out the very human life found in those commands.

Advent and Christmas are a time to renew our embrace of that life as we see it arrive among us in Jesus, the son of Mary. He is the life, and He makes that life yours.

About the Cover Art

How rarely we see St. Joseph portrayed at Christmas, and when we do, how often he appears in the background, solemn and weary! Yet here we find a joyful Joseph, delighting in his wife's newborn son. As we learn later, Joseph raise Him as his own son (Matthew 13:55, Luke 4:22, John 6:42). God creates love where love never was before! He especially does so through the advent of Christ, who comes into our arms through the words and sacraments of His Church. Jesus restores love to a love-less world, making the unlovely lovely. Jason Jenicke is the artist of this piece, entitled, “St. Joseph and Baby Jesus.”

The Third Joy of Being Human: Work

Thanksgiving, repentance, and now *work*. Can *work* really be one of the joys of being human?

We often think of leisure time as better than work, but consider what our leisure time so often entails: the bustling activity of preparing a feast, the athletic exertion of sports and play, the effort of travel, the demands of conversation, and so much more. Even the mere act of sleeping must be preceded by the work of creating a safe place to rest!

God works; created in His image, we work. By work, we participate in the divine life of love and enter into the joy of leisure and rest. Thus work is part of health and spiritual wellbeing. “All hard work brings a profit,” even if it is the simple profit of the honor and virtue that comes from reflecting God’s own character (Proverbs 14:23). On page 4, you’ll read more on how Christian faith embraces the call to work.

Daily Readings for the Week of Advent 3 (December 12)

S Amos 9:11-15
2 Thessalonians 2:1-3,
13-17
John 5:30-47

M Zechariah 1:7-17
Revelation 3:7-13
Matthew 24:15-31

T Zechariah 2:1-13
Revelation 3:14-22
Matthew 24:32-44

W Zechariah 3:1-10
Revelation 4:1-8
Matthew 24:45-51

Th Zechariah 4:1-14
Revelation 4:9—5:5
Matthew 25:1-13

F Zechariah 7:8—8:8
Revelation 5:6-14
Matthew 25:14-30

Sa Zechariah 8:9-17
Revelation 6:1-17
Matthew 25:31-46

These readings correspond to pages 71-99 in Volume III of For All the Saints.

Saved By Grace *To Do Good Works*

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

Works do not save us. No one will rise from the dead because they kept the Ten Commandments perfectly or grew enough in holiness to make God say to Himself, “Hmm, I think I’ll keep that one.” Salvation “is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Yet why has God saved us? He has saved us *for* doing good works.

This dynamic life relates directly to the celebration of Christmas. As C. S. Lewis puts it in *The Four Loves*:

[O]ur imitation of God in this life . . . must be an imitation of God incarnate: our model is the Jesus, not only of Calvary, but of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions, the lack of all peace and privacy, the interruptions. For this, so strangely unlike anything we can attribute to the Divine life in itself, is apparently not only like, but is, the Divine life operating under human conditions

Or as our Lord Jesus has said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Good works are simply the confirmation and joyful reflection of the truth: God has given us the life of Christ. That life not only involves resurrection and eternity, but also self-sacrificing service and love.

In the end, you see, the joy of being human is the joy of being in fellowship with God. Thanksgiving, repentance, and work all exercise that fellowship among us, receiving the harvest of salvation with joy and pressing from it a sweet, festive wine.