



THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

Daily Devotion at Zion + December 19, 2021 AD + [Advent Season](#)

Being Truly Human

Part Four: Fed

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden.” (Genesis 2:16)

Of course, there was one tree of which God also commanded man *not* to eat, but the point remains: when God created the human race, He gave us mouths and stomachs that we might *eat*! Eating is something we share in common with so many other creatures, and at the same time it is fundamentally part of being joyfully human.

First God created a whole earth to support the feast, and then He created the feasters! He intended eating to be a supernal joy by which His people would know His true character. “The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights” (Psalm 36:7-8). God provides!

From manna in the wilderness to a land flowing with milk and honey to now, in these last days, the blessed flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, God has shared His love, and even Himself, with the human family through food! How then shall we include eating in our devotion? Read on to learn!

About the Cover Art

French painter Pierre Mignard (1612-1695) painted this image of the Virgin Mary feeding grapes to our Lord Jesus Christ. An idealized image for sure, it nevertheless leads us to contemplate our Lord’s humanity and childhood. What child has not sat in his mother’s lap, grinning with joy as he is fed? Here, our toddler Lord peeks at us from beneath the Virgin’s veil, inviting us to contemplate not only His life, but also our life in Him. As He feeds on the grapes, so do we feed on the bread which is His flesh and the wine which is His blood. Here before us is the Feast of Feasts!

The Fourth Joy of Being Human: Eating

Thanksgiving, repentance, work, and now *eating*: four joys of our human life to consider this season.

Within the Church, the last one gathers the other three. Coming to the fellowship of Christ by way of repentance, we come to the table where God uses our labor in His good earth to provide a gift for which we've never worked at all, but can only give thanks: the gift of Jesus Christ Himself, in His flesh, blood, soul, spirit, mind, and the glory of His crucified yet resurrected life.

In the end, this is the joy of being human: communion with Jesus. In His flesh, our flesh finds its redemption. Restored to the image of our Creator through the forgiveness of sins, we find ourselves full of thanks, fed beyond all imagining, and prepared to do all things "through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

That's salvation: not to be God, but to be joyfully human.

Daily Readings for the Week of Advent 4 (December 19)

S Genesis 3:8-15
Revelation 12:1-10
John 3:16-21

M Zephaniah 3:14-20
Titus 1:1-16
Luke 1:1-25

T 1 Samuel 2:1b-10
Titus 2:1-10
Luke 1:26-38

W 2 Samuel 7:1-17
Titus 2:11—3:8a
Luke 1:39-56

Th 2 Samuel 7:18-29
Galatians 3:1-14
Luke 1:57-66

F Jeremiah 31:10-14
Galatians 3:15-22
Luke 1:67-80

Sa Isaiah 60:1-6
Galatians 3:23—4:7
Matthew 1:18-25

These readings correspond to pages 99-130 in Volume III of For All the Saints.

Being Human *in Inhumane Times*

So how do we keep our humanity when times turn inhumane? Some might say we do it by “keeping Christmas year ‘round.” But how do we do so? That is, where does *God* keep *His* Christmas among us? Answer: at His Christmas *feast*, of course!

We might think of God’s feast as having four parts: 1), the feast of Jesus, and then three more feasts that it sets for us: 2) the feast of creation, 3) the feast of faith, 4) and the feast of love. In each of these, God grounds us in His Son’s humanity, that we may be decent, loving, joyful brethren to our fellow creatures.

The Feast of Jesus: You know this feast. It is the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Communion. Here you eat and drink the very same flesh that was conceived in the womb of Mary, born at Bethlehem, touched by the sick, nailed to a cross, buried, and raised again to rule at God’s right hand. The Holy Supper *is* Christmas, God in human body and blood!

The Feast of Creation: By conveying to us His life-giving flesh in simple foodstuffs, our Lord sanctifies creation and teaches us to see in all of our food a holy gift from His hand. Thus all of our eating becomes a feast of His care, and a cause for inviting others with Christmas-like rejoicing and praise.

The Feast of Faith. Blessed by God at both the feast of salvation and the feast of creation, we trust in Him, and that faith enlivens Christmas in our souls. For wherever we trust Jesus, there is Jesus Himself, the Child of Bethlehem, with us.

The Feast of Love. In His Feast, Jesus reveals Himself to be the God who pours Himself out for the world in love. Graced by such a Lord, can we do less? Those who say that Christmas lives in our daily acts of kindness are right, because that kindness is an extension and gift of the Lord’s own, taught to us and instilled in us by His Spirit. In Christ’s humanity, we discover ours.