

Advent 2017

Week Two

Tuesday, December 12

Prepare the way of the Lord!

Prayers for candle-lighting

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying;

for he is speaking peace to his faithful people who turn their hearts to him;

[Light the candle]

The grass withers, the flower fades;

but the word of our Lord God will stand forever.

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying;

for he is speaking peace to his faithful people who turn their hearts to him.

Isaiah 40:3

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

The King’s Highway is an ancient trading route which runs from Egypt northward through the desert of modern-day Jordan east of the Jordan River. This highway was the very same road the ancient Israelites traveled during their exodus from Egypt as they emerged from the wilderness and approached the promised land. After moving north along the King’s Highway, they then left the highway, turned westward to cross the Jordan River, and finally entered the promised land.

In today's scripture passage, Isaiah alludes to the King's Highway used by his ancestors as they escaped Pharaoh's slavery in Egypt. For Isaiah, this highway in the desert *metaphorically* becomes the route by which God will now lead the people out of their exile in Babylon to freedom in Jerusalem.

The early Christians took the metaphor a step further. They understood this "highway" to freedom from oppression, this "way of the Lord," to be the life-giving patterns of justice and mercy reflected in the life and ministry of Jesus. In Jesus, God provides us with a pattern of life, a pathway, that leads us out from all that would prevent us from living freely into God's generosity and love, our true calling.

For Reflection:

In what ways today are you in bondage to the wider culture and its expectations for your life?

In Jesus, God is showing you a way forward, a kind of King's Highway that will lead you to freedom. Can you see that way forward in the life and patterns of Jesus?

Is there a teaching or a story of Jesus that you are especially drawn to? Perhaps that story may contain a particular call to you?