

May the words of my mouth and the mediations of my heart be acceptable to you oh God, my strength and my joy... Amen

The other day I was presiding over a funeral of a friend... I had arrived early to greet the family and see if they needed anything in the long hours of visitation before the service began...

After talking with them, I went into the sanctuary to start getting things prepared and to prep for the afternoon's service.

Sadly, this was the funeral for a younger woman... She had two boys and a plethora of nieces and nephews... Needless to say the church was filled with a ton of young children coming in and out and exploring every inch of the church as though they had a map and were looking for hidden treasure...

So here I am in the sanctuary and this little toddler comes in... he is excited to see me and climbs up the three steps and is just doing his thing.

While, I'm trying my best to entertain him and comically also trying to carry on a conversation with a boy who can't quite speak...

When the next thing I know, he puts his hands up in the air, and then without blinking an eye, turns and dives down the three steps head first!

I immediately rush down to see if he is okay, while at the same time trying to play it cool and not make a fuss of things when I call over to his dad, whom I have known for years, and tell him what his son just did...

He looks at me and says... You know he's my kid, and he's a boy, would you expect anything else?

I look down while all of this is happening and his boy, without skipping a beat, picks himself back up and runs off to the next thing that captivates him...

The strange things that can happen while children have hours to wait for something to start...

And last week we talked a lot about waiting... Waiting that is with a purpose...

But what happens when we think about waiting with a purpose... with kids... especially the littlest of the littles.

I am not a mother, but I have experience with kids, and I have a wonderful niece that I was able to be present with and a part of her growing up...

And waiting can be a challenge sometimes... As I remember from my own childhood with long car rides ahead... the, "are we there yet" questions...

And yet, there is something that only a child can unveil about waiting....

And, today's text in Isaiah is all about that little child...

Today we heard that, "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

Because to little children, until they are taught otherwise, an animal is an animal... One is not a predator and the other is not a baby prey... And in our text from today, this specific child sees all the animals as God's creation and leads them together, where they are at peace with one another...

Again, like we saw last week, Isaiah is portraying a new creation altogether. This is the dawning of a new day, where all creation is at peace with one another, and today the vision all starts with... a stump...

Out of something that appears lifeless, comes a sign of new life... First coming up as a shoot... As this is how hope starts, with a tiny tendril coming up out of something dead and growing into a branch...

Showing us that from death there is always the possibility of life and hope.

While at the same time, this new life, can lead to more than hope, it can lead to something that many of us hope for... it can lead to peace...

Peace, that is, if you are open to the stirrings of the Spirit and the transformative work of God.

Because there is nothing that you can do to bring about the peace that is portrayed in Isaiah.

This is the kind of peace that is only brought about by the Spirit of God...

Yet, at the same time, you do need to allow the work to take place in you, and you need to be open to the transformative work of God.

And sometimes for that transformation to happen, you need to first be made aware of what you are truly experiencing and living...

And this is where the text from Isaiah ties in so beautifully.

As the text from today could be inviting you to identify the stumps that are in your life... The places in your life that seem lifeless, the places in your life that need the transformative action of God to sprout up hope...

Or maybe the text from today is asking you to identify the predator and the prey that live inside of you, or in your relationships, and wonder...

How might the transformative action of God help bring about the kind of peace discussed between predator and prey today?

Or maybe none of those illustrations speak to you... Maybe today all you need is to hear, is that God is with you, and that the Spirit of God will bring about transformation in your life...

Because God desires to sprout up hope in you, and to shine light, into your heart...

God desires to bring about peace in your being, in your relationships, and in all of creation...

After all our second advent candle today shines in the name of peace...

Peace that was brought to all of creation through a child. A child that God sent to us...

For God sent his only son, who's birth we are waiting for this advent... as this is what this beautiful season is all about...

And advent plays around with the images of light and dark, of brightness and shadows, to illustrate how Christ is our light... light that is, that was birthed in holy darkness...

So, this week, as you wait with purpose, I invite you, to channel some child-like wonder into your waiting...

And to think... What would happen if I put my hands up in the air, allowing myself to be open to the transformative action of God and then, dive right in...

Now, please don't literally go diving down steps face first this week...

But what would happen if we invited that fearless, openness, and readiness to wait with God?

To allow God to transform in your life... To let Christ be your light, and live for today... Amen...