

## 1 Advent Devotion

3 December 2017

**Song:** sing verses 1 and 2 of “Light a Candle in a Darkened Place” by Care Stainsby

### 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

*<sup>4</sup> I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup> For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— <sup>6</sup> God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. <sup>7</sup> Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. <sup>8</sup> He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

It is astonishing to think of Paul’s gracious attitude in all circumstances ! How humbling it is

to know that he always had a grateful spirit and a thankful heart; always thanking God for his grace given to the church in Jesus Christ.

In this passage, Paul shares his heart with the church in Corinthians which was by no means an ideal church. However, God’s grace in Paul’s life led him to remind them that it is the richness they have in Jesus Christ is the real significance in life. This should be their testimony, the reason for their witness and their encouragement in their journey with God that Christ is their richness. God’s grace left the church in Corinth not lacking anything and the least anyone can do is to share His goodness with others, with those who have not experienced the Lord yet, with those who are weary, broken hearted, lonely and hopeless.

Regardless of the persecution Paul suffered, he reiterated over and over that God is rich in God’s faithfulness and love; which in turn

keeps us strengthened as we walk with God and as we follow God’s guidance and leading. As we meditate on God’s faithfulness to us this season, let us, like Paul, have hearts full of encouragement towards those with whom we serve, lead and shepherd. May we humble ourselves before the Lord, put others first and open our eyes to those who need uplifting and encouragement, and may we open our hearts and arms to embrace them with the love of the Lord.

The circumstances on the ground continue to be difficult in this part of the world, and everywhere else, but we have a great mission to present ourselves blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since God has called us into fellowship with Jesus Christ, then surely, we are also called to fellowship with one another through Christ.

As we patiently wait for the Lord Jesus to be revealed, as we eagerly pray, “come Lord Jesus,” may we

seek to be transformed to God's image, the very image that Paul called Christ's followers to imitate and reflect.

In this process of waiting, praying, hoping and anticipating, God has promised to keep us firm, rooted, unshaken, leaning on the Rock of ages, Jesus Christ who physically dwelt in Bethlehem more than two thousand years ago, but daily makes his magnificent presence known in our hearts and lives wherever we are!

### **Light the 1<sup>st</sup> candle.**

*Let us pray, "come Lord Jesus, transform us in God's image in order that we can faithfully reach out to all in need. This Advent, prepare our lives for your amazing grace to be realized in us, so that we can stand for justice and love in this world." Amen.*



**Written by** Michael Arteen who is serving with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church as chaplain at Bethlehem Bible College.

**Picture taken by** Michael Arteen, olives representing the faithfulness of those who have gone before us, investing in the lives of future

generations, like God's love and faithfulness.

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