

Ps 132
2 Samuel 7:4, 8-16
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

(In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.)

Good morning!
And, my Lord, what a morning it is!

You see, Tom and I have asked God if we can be the next Mr. and Mrs. Santa Clause...and He has graciously answered us. (We have even already received a Christmas card addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus...from one of our elves, no doubt. *[Hold up card.]*)

So...what would you like for Christmas?

Let your hearts wander for a minute. Close your eyes and picture a world of sparkling iridescence whirling around you.

Go ahead. Imagine it.

And listen...listen to your heart, a voice crying out in the wilderness. For that is where all wanderings...all journeys begin.

And believe...that there is no limit to the Love that God has for you!

...That before you were even born, He knew you. Before Jesus came, He loved you. Before the Annunciation, before He plucked David out of the fields, tending his sheep, He had a plan for you.

Before Moses...before Abram...before the beginning of time, He set your feet on a path that begins in humility and ends in an incredible flight, on the wings of angels.

How can that be? Why...God is infinite! That means that God is a being outside of our normal space and time. He can affect what *was*, as well as

what *is* and what *will be*. And, therefore, before you ask, it will be given unto you.

Why is it that we have such a hard time with this concept, and yet...many of us will sit in front of a Star Trek episode and blindly accept that a change in the past can change the Space-time continuum? Suddenly, everything is different...and the past is forgotten. We know that this T.V. program isn't "real"...and somehow this allows us to accept the reality of the story. The fact is, we WANT to believe...because it gives us hope in a better tomorrow...and in the fact that maybe, just maybe, the past will be forgotten...along with all our mistakes...and all those things that we would rather not be...or would rather not have done.

Impossible?

For us, maybe...but according to the angel Gabriel,

"...nothing is impossible to God."

The Word of God changes things, including the direction of our lives.

He took David out of a field of sheep and made him a Prince.
His Word caused a handmaiden, Mary, to be called the mother of God.
He even changed Paul...and from what I understand, that was no easy feat!

Listen...

We are like babies in a crib. We hear the wind...footsteps...cars outside our windows...birds...and a multitude of other sounds. And, eventually, we learn the sound of a parent's voice. But first, we have to learn to distinguish it from all the other sounds that we hear.

If you wish to hear Him, you must learn to listen.

Listen to you own heart...and to the hearts of others.

If you can't hear what you can see and touch and feel, how do you expect to hear what you can't see...or touch...or feel.

So...close you eyes...go ahead, gently close them. Shut out all the extraneous noise and allow the strong arms of your Father in heaven to lift you up...and tell you a story.

You see, once upon a time, a long time ago, God wanted a man to take a journey. But before that could happen, the man had to learn to recognize the Voice of God. It took the man quite a long time to do this...because, it was so long ago that the man didn't know that God's voice came in Truth, Love, and Peace...and that he had to listen with his heart instead of his ears.

But, one day, the man did hear the Word of God, and God told him to leave where he was and to go where God would lead him.

So the man packed up and went with God.

And each place that the man went had a very special name...a name given to the place long before the man's journey. In fact, the names of the places were so old that even they had been sent on a journey by God, traveling from their original meanings to the place-names that they would eventually become.

Here are the meanings of the places from which he came and to which he traveled. If you listen carefully, they may remind you of some one.

A Light out of the East
To a parched land

And then, hearing God's voice, he came in
Humility,
Grew in Strength.

Again, he heard God's voice
And was given God's promise of inheritance.

He pitched his tent on a mountain, between the
House of God and Ruin
And called on God's name.

Stage by stage, he made his way to a
Dry Place.
Then he went to
Suffering, Bound over to the enemy,

Where he finally reached the
End Point...or Limit...of his travels.

Then, God led him back by the same route that he had gone.

He came again, in
Humbleness
Heard, again, God's promise
And, finally, came to a place which means
In strength, lifting up self with wings
To mystically join with, or...be in community with...others.

A fairy tale? No.

These are the derivations of the place names that comprised Abram's travels (Abram, by the way, means "Father Lifted Up")...and are taken straight out of the book of Genesis, chapters 12 and 13.

They are examples of the power and magnitude of God's Word...of how that Word was made flesh...became real...and caused ramifications across all of space and time.

God's Word is infinite.

In a way, it can be likened to a well-tuned instrument...a hammered dulcimer, for instance. Those of you who have seen one know that it has about a hundred strings. When it's out of tune, it has a very shallow, tinny sound; but when it is perfectly in tune, you can strike one note and that note resonates with a 5th and an octave above itself.

And these two notes resonate at a 5th and an octave above themselves... And so on and so on, forever reaching upward.

You may hear only one note, but that note is rich and full...and composed of vibrations that you can't even begin to imagine. And in the same way, you may only hear one Word of God, but that one Word resonates throughout a perfectly tuned creation, rich and full and spiraling ever upward.

Even before the first Christmas, before the Annunciation of Mary, before David, the Word of God set in motion the events that have led and will continue to lead His children in the path of righteousness.

Have you figured out what you'd like for Christmas, yet?
I hope so. But if not, close your eyes, again...and listen to one last story. Maybe, it will give you some gift ideas.

This story, like the previous one, is the Word of God; but it was given, not at the beginning of recorded history, some 2000 years before Christ, but to the children of this parish, some 2000 years after His birth.

On the other hand, who knows when the story really began and where it will lead. It came from a place beyond space and time. A place of iridescent light. And it was, is, and shall forever be a Christmas gift...to you...and to the whole world.

A long time ago, there was a ray of light that traveled to earth from heaven and warmed the very hearts of men. It was reflected off of many things, but then it encountered a man-made object of glass. (Eventually, this object would be known as a "prism.") And as it encountered this glass, the light was not surprised to find itself bent and broken into its many colors.

But when one man saw the "red," he said, "That's the light!"
And when another saw the "blue," he said, "That's the light!"
And so on and so on.

And then, many years later, Man discovered that the "pieces" were really part of the whole; and (as all children learn as they grow a bit in understanding) the thing that had been taken apart could be put back together, again.

And, behold, now it begins.
A beautiful new age of joining is upon us, and the things that have been separated will soon be seen in their "true light."

And a oneness of God will fill the earth.

Where truth has been seen in its many forms (some even perceived as separate from God), a joining together begins; and all truths will be seen in the Light of God.

A thing that was taken apart, to discover how it worked, will be built anew, with greater understanding in the process; and a new stage in Mankind's growth, a bright new age begins.

Praise the Lord! Thanks be to God!

Amen.