

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024 – 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ADVENT

## Malachi 3:1-4

1 – See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me.

2 - But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.

3 - He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver.

*Refiner's fire and fullers' soap – cleansing, purifying, strengthening*

*He will sit – the refiner does not leave the silver while it is in the fire*

*When does the refiner know when the silver has been purified?*

James 1: 2-4 – Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

*What trials are you facing right now?*

*How are you doing at considering those trials nothing but joy?*

*How is the testing of your faith producing endurance?*

*In what areas of your life do you have more endurance now than you used to have?*

1 Peter 1: 6-7 – In this (the new birth and living hope that we have been given through the resurrection of Jesus) you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus is revealed.

*What fires are testing the genuineness of your faith right now?*

## Luke 1:68-79 (instead of a Psalm)

Four beautiful songs or poems in the first two chapters of Luke

Song of Mary - Luke 1: 46-55 – said to Elizabeth - My soul magnifies the Lord

Song of Zechariah – Luke 1: 68-79 – said after John was born and given his name –

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them

Song of the Angels – said to the shepherds - Luke 2: 14 – Glory to God in the highest heaven

Song of Simeon – Luke 2: 29-32 – Lord, now let your servant go in peace

Luke 1: 13-17 - Angel Gabriel to Zechariah –

Many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.

Even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.

With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

*How would you feel if a messenger from God said those kinds of things about your child even before he or she was conceived?*

*What were your hopes and dreams for your child even before he or she was born?*

68 - Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, you have come to your people and set them free.  
69 - You have raised up for us a mighty Savior, born of the house of your servant David.  
76-77 - And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,  
to give God's people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

### **Philippians 1:3-11**

3-5 - I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.

*Cf. 1 Thessalonians 3: 9 – How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?*

6 - I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

7-8 - It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

9-10 - This is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best.

### **Luke 3:1-6**

1-2 - In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

3-6 - He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,  
"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.  
Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth;  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Luke 1: 1-4 – Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

Luke 2: 1-2 – In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

Acts 18: 12 – But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews (in Corinth) made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal.