

Haiti Happenings

Shaina Thiner
Christmas 2022

“Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

Isaiah 12:6

Dear Family,

I have always loved Christmas-time. Not just Christmas... Christmas-*time*. To me, the build-up, the *anticipation*, of the celebration to come was even more enjoyable than the celebration itself. So the tradition of Advent is one I strive to observe in some way each holiday season.

As I was writing the general newsletter for our ministry I was struck again by what Advent truly signifies and points to: *the how*. Advent isn't just about waiting. It isn't even only about anticipation. Each of Advent's candle symbolizes the *way* we are to wait. Advent is about waiting for the Messiah (for us now that means His second coming), but I believe what each candle represents can also be applied to any situation in which we are waiting on God in our lives.

The first candle represents hope. It is nearly impossible to wait without hope. Thankfully as followers of Christ we can *know* that what He has promised will come to pass. We can *know* that God is Who He says He is and God can do what He says He can do. *He* is our hope.

The second candle represents peace. Waiting is definitely not something we would choose...if it was up to us we would have what we want exactly when we wanted it every time! And so when we are forced or asked to wait it is so easy to become frustrated and impatient...peace is rarely something in our hearts when we are waiting! And yet because our hope is in the fulfillment of His promises, and that He will always give us what we need and what is best, that hope can bring us peace when we cling to it and not our own will.

The third candle is the one that stood out most to me. We are currently in the middle of week three of Advent, which focuses on joy. In meditating on the original Advent, and how long it lasted...for the Israelites, centuries...I realized how much we need joy during a long season of waiting. I wonder how much of a difference it would have made for the Jewish people if they had held onto joy? I wonder if more of them would have seen Him when He came had they held onto joy. It can be so easy to lose our joy...even easier than losing hope, because we can know what is true without really believing it and implementing it in our lives. Joy comes when we take what we know to be true and act upon it whether we feel like it or not.

The fourth candle represents love. Most importantly it represents God's love...what greater love is this than to lay down one's life? (John 15:13, my paraphrase). When we know and believe we are loved beyond measure, and nothing we can do will ever make Him love us less, and nothing we can do will ever make Him love us more, the waiting becomes not just a trial, but a gift. Because we know that

what we really need has already been given to us...not a what but a "Who".

Please continue to pray:

1. Protection over our people as they serve in Haiti during a time of great instability.
2. For peace and hope as Wilckly and Dee move forward in expanding the ministry across the island.
3. For wisdom, clarity, health, energy, and peace for them and all under their leadership.
4. For the means to continue providing for all those under their care in Haiti and the DR.
5. For peace for Haiti and its people.

Merry Christmas

from **Shaina** and family!

Eden, Asher, Silas, Matthew, Shaina, Xander, Jude



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