

Third Sunday of Advent, December 17

### **Promises and Holiness!**

*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*  
2 Corinthians 7:1 (ESV)

The birth of a child brings hope and expectations. Hope for a life filled with blessings and joy. Expectations of a life filled with dreams and love. Jesus' birth brought this to Mary and Joseph, and so much more to the rest of the world. We hope this is the case for every child.

Jesus's birth in Bethlehem was an answer to prayer for so many. Not only in his time but ours too! It was the fulfillment of God's promises to us. The promises of a Law fulfilled and the promises the prophets proclaimed. The promise that is answered in ways not asked or imagined of. The blessing of Christmas is one that unfolds throughout our lives.

Every Christmas I worry about how worldly I am. Let's be honest; there is something satisfying about getting a great gift. Or even better, giving a gift that is well received. The worldly side of Christmas can detract from its true meaning and of Christian holiness. It is important to me to remember through the joys of Christmas that my one real joy is in Jesus Christ,

My hope for Christmas is to be holy and to use the season to celebrate Jesus. It is a challenge. The temptations of the world are present, but my desire to be holy is reborn every Christmas. And hopefully, with every Christmas, I can get a little closer to the incredible beauty of that first Christmas day.

**May we pray, Lord Jesus Christ, who is the timeless Son of God, born in time and of Mary. May we who walk yet as pilgrims, be guided by your light and love and that we may continually grow in holiness all our days. We pray in your name. Amen.**

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