



PRELUDE

Reflective Readings

Epiphany 2021

Reflective Readings

This material is intended for personal meditation. You may want to be in a quiet place and light your own personal candle, but you may also just be sitting in your car waiting for an appointment. Where you are is not the point. The point is that you are taking the time to be quiet and listen so that you may walk through your day in communion with God. Each page contains a reading

What is Epiphany?

Jesus is born and a new year has begun. Epiphany is defined in the church year as a festival commemorating the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi in Matthew 2:1-12. In regular English usage it is defined as a moment of sudden revelation or insight. This Epiphany season at Tabernacle we are seeking to take the time to reacquaint ourselves with the person of Jesus. Our theme for the year is "Begin Again." We will be walking with Jesus as He is revealed in the gospel of Luke. The readings for each week will reveal a different aspect of the person and ministry of Jesus as a human living in community with other humans. God chose to be born on earth as a human person to lead us into His Kingdom. This Epiphany season we are praying that we will be able to look at Jesus with fresh eyes and hearts, to gain epiphanies from familiar words.



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Reading 1

Reflect on the words of this hymn. The text reminds us that Jesus came from Heaven to earth to lead us into the freedom of the Kingdom of God. Please repeat the words to the chorus several times.

Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

E.S. Elliot

Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown,
when Thou camest to earth for me;
but in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
for Thy holy nativity.

O Come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
there is room in my heart for Thee.

Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
proclaiming Thy royal degree;
but of lowly birth didst Thou come to earth,
and in great humility

O Come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
there is room in my heart for Thee.

The foxes found rest, and the birds their nest
in the shade of the forest tree;
but Thy couch was the sod, O Thou Son of God,
in the deserts of Galilee.

O Come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
there is room in my heart for Thee.

Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word
that should set Thy people free;
But with mocking scorn, and with crown of thorn,
they bore Thee to Calvary.

O Come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
there is room in my heart for Thee.



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Reading 2

“Our Little Lives” by Howard Thurman

Our little lives, our big problems—these we place upon Thy altar!
The quietness in Thy Temple of Silence again and again rebuffs us:
For some there is no discipline to hold us steady in the waiting
And the minds reject the noiseless invasion of Thy spirit.
For some there is no will to offer what is central in the thoughts—
The confusion is so manifest, there is no starting place to take hold.
For some the evils of the world tear down all concentrations
And scatter the focus of high resolves.

War and threat of war has covered us with heavy shadows,
Making the days big with forebodings—
The nights crowded with frenzied dreams and restless churnings.
We do not know how to do what we know to do.
We do not know how to be what we know to be.

Our little lives, our big problems---these we place upon Thy altar!
Brood over our spirits, our Father.
Blow upon whatever dream Thou hast for us
That there may glow once again upon our hearths,
The fire of Thy Contagion.
Pour out upon us whatever our spirits need of shock, of lift
of release.
That we may find strength for these days---
Courage and hope for tomorrow.
In confidence we rest in Thy sustaining grace.
Which makes possible triumph in defeat, gain in loss, and love
in hate.
We rejoice in this day to say:
Our little lives, our big problems—these we place upon Thy altar.

Thurman, Howard, *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations* (Friends United Press: Richmond, Indiana) 1973, p. 94.



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Reading 3

“Journey with Purpose” by Susan Palo Cherwien

People sense deep down
that there is more to life
than making money
and paying bills
Some reach the point
in life
when all seems
dry and barren
food loses savor
dawn loses pleasure
extreme experiences entice
But even these
do not suffice.
shopping
planning
acquiring

we discern
only temporarily satisfy
Humans of all ages
find themselves
thirsting
for the reality
underlying reality
It is a thirst
that will not be quenched.
and, often
we search for the key
in all the wrong places
while patiently
God
waits

Take a few moments and listen ----ask God to point you in the right direction

Cherwien, Susan Palo, *To God I Give My Melody: Reflections for Worship* (Morningstar Publishers: St. Louis, Mo. 2019) p. 106.



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Reading 4

“Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me” by Howard Thurman

Open unto me---light for my darkness
Open unto me---courage for my fear
Open unto me---hope for my despair
Open unto me---peace for my turmoil
Open unto me---joy for my sorrow
Open unto me---strength for my weakness
Open unto me---wisdom for my confusion
Open unto me---forgiveness for my sins
Open unto me---tenderness for my toughness
Open unto me---love for my hates
Open unto me---Thy self for my self

Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me

Thurman, Howard, *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations* (Friends United Press: Richmond, Indiana) 1973, p. 96.



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Reading 5

“New Every Morning”
by Susan Palo Cherwien

“The steadfast love of God
never ceases;
God’s mercies never come
to an end;
they are new every morning”
Lamentations 3:22-23

God is always
drawing the universe
toward newness
God is ever
beckoning us
to become
to become new creations
to step beyond.
Wonders surround us
Can we remain unmoved?
Shall we stare uncomprehending
as Luther says,
“like a cow
staring at a new gate?”
The universe spirals

toward diversity
toward complexity
Wake, awake
it sings in the ear,
Step beyond
become new
become the person
God created you to be:
prophets, apostles, white-robed martyrs,
teachers, carpenters, physicists, poets
unexpected.
mysterious.
In the heart of God
In the mind of Christ
In the fire of the Spirit.

Cherwien, Susan Palo, *To God I Give My Melody: Reflections for Worship* (Morningstar Publishers: St. Louis, Mo. 2019) p. 220-221.



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Prayer

There is much turmoil in the world today. We are called to pray and remember that we live in God's Kingdom. Often when we pray for people we are praying that God will change their hearts to agree with our beliefs, often when we pray for the world we are praying that God will make the world the way we think it should be, often when we pray for political change we are praying God will change other's hearts to agree align with ours,

Pray that God will guide us to actions and thoughts that lead to "Thy kingdom come on earth and it is in heaven"

Pray for physical and spiritual healing in the world.

Pray for children and teens as they struggle to find their way in this world.

Pray for people seeking work and financial security

Pray that people will be open to the movement of God's Spirit

Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me.

Amen