

Sermon for the Third Sunday in Advent  
“The Lord Is at Hand”  
Philippians 4:4-7  
12/16/18c

PRAYER: [*Thank the Lord for this time. Bid the Holy Spirit teach our hearts and minds. Address the Lord Jesus, whose return is near: Thank Him for all that He has done for us. Ask Him to be near us all our days until we are with Him in heaven.*]

1. *Preparation:* With God’s blessing, may this morning and these moments be a time for us all of devout attention to God’s Word, God’s message to us. It’s a busy season. God has brought us here for a time in His Word. We look to what He will say to us.

**<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!**

**<sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.**

**<sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

2. *God Teaches Us:* These well-known words of Paul from Philippians 4 are chosen for this Advent season, on this third Sunday, because of their emphasis upon joy, for one thing. But also, and probably primarily, because of the statement situated right in the middle of our text, that

**“The Lord is at hand.” (v.5b)**

It’s three short words in Greek: “o kurios engus”.

It can well be translated also: The Lord is near. Think about what that means.

→(from today’s OT lesson) *Zephaniah 3:14-17: Sing, shout, be glad, rejoice: [The LORD...in your midst]*

→(from today’s Holy Gospel) *Luke 7:18-35: Who is this “Lord”? He has come among us in the flesh, in Jesus Christ. What did Jesus do? What He did shows Him to be the Lord, the Messiah, the Coming One: **The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.** Jesus came to redeem and to restore the fallen creation. “Blessed is he who is not offended by [Christ].”*

Paul teaches us what results from faith in this Jesus, who is with us in Word and Sacrament, and who is coming again:

→Let your gentleness be known to all men.

→Let your requests be made known to God.

And with this:

→Joy (*in the Lord!*) is for us always

→Peace (*that of God*) guards our hearts and minds *through Christ Jesus*

3. *Conclusion. [Just say again what God has done and taught.]*

Exegetical Statement: From prison, Christ's apostle Paul urges the saints in Philippi to a life marked by continual joy and prayer, a life gentle, not anxious, and full of thankfulness. The joy is "in the Lord"—in connection with Jesus Christ, God's Son, their Savior, who is "at hand" (v.5). And the prayer is to the God who sent His Son, who through that Son gives heavenly peace to all believers.