

Devotional for Advent Week 2

From “Bless the Advent We Actually Have” by Kate Bowler & the Everything Happens Project.
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Peace Amid Chaos

I will hear what the LORD God speaks; he speaks of peace...Merciful love and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have kissed. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth, and justice look down from heaven.

—PSALM 85:8, 10-11 (RGP)



“Shh, the baby’s sleeping!” says every new parent ever. But who can resist sneaking in on tip-toe to catch a glimpse of all that sleeping beauty. It’s no wonder God chose to win our hearts by coming to us as an itty-bitty infant. God speaks to us through the coming of Jesus, and that word God speaks, is *peace*. “Peace on earth and good toward all,” sang the angels at his birth (Luke 2:14, The Kate Bowler Version).

Yet, just as the peace of a snoozing baby is temporary, Christmas is precisely the time when peace can be in short supply too. There is so much expectation, so much longing and desire wrapped up into this celebration that it can be one of the most stress-filled times of the year. So much to do, and so little time. High pressure traditions that used to be fun or meaningful. Obligations that stretch us too thin. Disappointment that so-and-so didn’t show up *again*. But somehow, we still find the time for the annual Christmas fight. *Ah, some traditions never die*. What we really need is a run-up to Advent—an Advent to our Advent—so we can get ready for getting ready.

Each Advent, there comes a point when I need to lock myself in the nearest bathroom. Take the deepest of breaths. Light a candle maybe. And find a way for

peace to be possible even here and now in this chaotic, too- full moment. Carving out a place where wholeness and shalom can envelope me. Settle me. Where differences dissolve and justice is satisfied.

The Hebrew word for *justice* in Psalm 85 is often translated “righteousness,” being made right with others and before God in a natural, moral, or legal sense. Jesus is our righteousness and the place of new beginnings, a change of heart, of fresh forgiveness, and of new life that can spring up in the places that were once dried up and gone. *Does that sound nice right about now or what?*

In the meantime, we practice waiting by opening ourselves to the refreshment God can rain down on us, even now in our longing, in the midst of so much disarray and unsettledness. Maybe here, we can create more and more space for this by giving over our worries and anxieties to God, naming them to ourselves and perhaps even to each other. We can breathe deeper when the heavy things we carry have been set down (or are at least shared with another). This is a form of peace— not only momentary relief from our struggles, but also the recognition that there are things we humans don’t know, can’t know, and that it’s like this for us all. *Life is hard, but we don’t have to go it alone.*

REFLECT

1. What is taking up your attention, stealing your peace, or causing you anxiety this Advent season?
2. Kate describes hiding away in the bathroom and lighting a candle when she feels overwhelmed or in need of a break. What habits or practices do you turn to when you need a break?
3. In Galatians 6:2, Paul encourages the church to “Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ” (NASB). What are you carrying? Can you share it with

others now? Even if it isn't easily fixable, can you shoulder it together?

BLESSING

Blessed are we who ask that this Advent
we might dwell together quietly in our homes.
Come, Lord, that we might be for others the peace they cannot find.

Blessed are we who look to you and say,
God, truly, we are troubled and afraid.
Come govern our hearts and calm our fears.

Oh Prince of Peace, still our restless selves,
calm our anxious hearts, quiet our busy minds.

LISTEN

Chris Tomlin and Audrey Assad sing "[Winter Snow](#)" (3:32 min).

<https://youtu.be/uDCtpIZH DA?si=6GKKCo78L8CQA-6b>

This beautiful song explores the many ways God could have come to earth, yet God chose to embrace humanity.

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