

## **Advent Week 4 – The Candle of Love**

### **Healing Beside the Horse – The Stable of Love**

#### **Word of God**

##### **2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16**

Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies,  
the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.”  
And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.”

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in?  
I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling.  
In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’”

Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep,  
that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you.  
And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.  
And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more.  
And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel;  
and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.  
And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’

**Psalm 89:1-5, 19-29**

I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.  
For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;  
in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."  
You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;  
I have sworn to David my servant:  
'I will establish your offspring forever,  
and build your throne for all generations.'"  
Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord,  
your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!

Of old you spoke in a vision to your godly one, and said:  
"I have granted help to one who is mighty;  
I have exalted one chosen from the people.  
I have found David, my servant;  
with my holy oil I have anointed him,  
so that my hand shall be established with him;  
my arm also shall strengthen him.  
The enemy shall not outwit him;  
the wicked shall not humble him.  
I will crush his foes before him  
and strike down those who hate him.  
My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him,  
and in my name shall his horn be exalted.  
I will set his hand on the sea  
and his right hand on the rivers.  
He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father,  
my God, and the Rock of my salvation.'  
And I will make him the firstborn,  
the highest of the kings of the earth.  
My steadfast love I will keep for him forever,  
and my covenant will stand firm for him.  
I will establish his offspring forever  
and his throne as the days of the heavens.

### **Romans 16:25–27**

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ,  
according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed  
and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God,  
to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

### **Luke 1:26–38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,  
to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.  
And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"  
But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.  
And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.  
He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.  
And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,  
and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."  
And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"  
And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you,  
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;  
therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.  
And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son,  
and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.  
For nothing will be impossible with God."  
And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."  
And the angel departed from her.

## Reflection in the Field

Love often comes quietly—arriving not in thunder or fire, but in the stillness of a barn, or the gentle whicker of a horse in the night.

As the wind moves across the stable and lantern light flickers against the stall walls, the world holds its breath. This is the night of divine nearness—the night when Love takes flesh.

The promise made to David in ages past is fulfilled in a manger. The eternal Word is not born into wealth or ease, but into the vulnerability of love.

The horse understands this language—the calm strength of companionship, the steady heart that waits and trusts.

In the stable of love, we are reminded that the Creator of all things came not to command, but to comfort; not to rule over us, but to dwell with us.

This is the heart of Advent's final light: Love has come, and Love will come again.

## Lutheran Reflection

Martin Luther wrote:

“Love is an image of God, and not a lifeless image, but the living essence of the divine nature which beams full of all goodness.”

— Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” 1520

Luther saw love not as an abstract idea, but as God's very presence among us.

To love is to live in the radiance of the Incarnation—to reflect the self-giving nature of Christ, who entered human life to redeem it from within.

When we act in love, we become living reflections of Emmanuel, God with us.

Like the horse who stands quietly beside us, love speaks through nearness, patience, and peace.

## Reflection Prompts

Where in your life do you see love reflected in small, quiet acts?

How does being with horses teach you about steadfast love and trust?

What would it look like to let God's love dwell more deeply in you this season?

## Closing Prayer

Lord of Love,

You enter our world not in power, but in tenderness.

You choose the humble and the waiting heart to bear Your light.

Teach us to love as You love—faithful, gentle, and true.

Let Your Spirit dwell within us,

that we may carry Your love into every place of need and longing.

Amen.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”  
— Numbers 6:24–26 (ESV)*