

SIGNS OF GRACE

Isaiah 7:10-14

Friday, March 22, 2019

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. — Psalm 121:2 (NRSV)

Remembering our times of poor decision-making can be painful. Perhaps we, like Ahaz, abandoned our faith in God, the consequences of which may have driven us to despair. Ahaz turned away from faith in God's ability to deliver the people of Judah from likely conquest by near-by enemies, even rejecting God's offer to provide a sign of God's willingness to do so.

I've noticed and guessing you have, too, our Lord God took the lead in seeking Ahaz, loving him and the people of Judah, even offering them a sign of assurance of His faithful deliverance. Even though Ahaz rejected God's help and compounded the sin by lying about why he didn't accept God's offer of a sign of His steadfastness, God continued His practice of prevenient grace. God directed Isaiah to prophesy the coming of Jesus, Immanuel (God with us), who would offer salvation to all. Preceding Jesus' birth would be the sign of Jesus' Mother becoming pregnant, though remaining a virgin.

We are approaching the 2019 celebration of Jesus' victory over all sin and its consequence of death by remembering our times of poor decision-making, confessing our sin, repenting from it and listening to our Lord God forgive us and deliver us from the oppression of sin. My life story is not as dramatic as that of Ahaz. However, when I speak with a "sharp tongue," am judgmental; ignore the need of someone; am lax in speaking encouraging words, etc., my poor decision-making indicates a turning away from our Lord God. Just as in the time of Ahaz and the people of Judah, God continues practicing prevenient grace through the Holy Spirit, lovingly inviting us to return to Him. The signs our Lord God provides today may not be as startling as that of a pregnant virgin, yet they convey God's loving grace, His availability to help us, whatever the challenge, and provide us hope.

Prayer: Gracious God, lead us to be grateful to You for lovingly seeking us, forgiving us and Your unwavering help to us. Thank You in the awesome name of Jesus. Amen

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