

ANGELS GUARD OUR STEPS

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11

March 7, 2020

“Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”

~ Matthew 4:11 (NIV)

It's Christmas Day, perhaps an odd time to be writing a Lenten devotion. But we as United Methodists have just completed an Advent season emphasizing the Angels of Christmas: their messages of strange news, of encouragement, and of great joy. They had appeared to and spoken to Zechariah, to Mary, to Joseph, and to the shepherds in the fields. And they had been near the place where the small family rested until it was safe for them to travel.

This passage in Matthew takes place about 30 years later, immediately after the baptism of Jesus, at the beginning of his ministry. After 40 days spent fasting and praying in the wilderness, Jesus was probably as weak and as in need of care as that newborn baby in the manger. This time, instead of his mother and earthly father to take care of his physical needs, it was angels who came to minister to him. They came from God for this purpose, but weren't they actually there all along? I like to believe they were and are always nearby. Even as the devil challenged Jesus to call on them for protection, they waited until Jesus had defeated the devil at his plan.

I like to think that those same angels who watched over Christ continue to watch over his followers. As we walk each day with Jesus, He and his angels guard our steps. A friend has a sign hanging near her workstation that reads: “Guardian angels are real, but sometimes they don't have wings and go by the name friends.” As Christians, we are called to walk with Christ and to minister to others, just as the angels attended Him. Too many of the people we encounter daily are broken, lost or grieving. Imagine a world where we hold to Jesus with one hand and reach out to others with our other hand.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the angels who walk among us. They may not be dressed in glowing white or have wings, but we remember that Paul wrote some had entertained angels without knowing. May we be angels to those in need as we seek to walk with Christ each day. Amen.

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