**Psalm 126**

“When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, ‘*The Lord has done great things for them*. *The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced’.” Psalm 126:1-3*

*“Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negeb. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.” Psalm 126: 4-6*

**Reflection Part 1:** As you read the words of Psalm 126, you are listening to a song about Israel’s dreams and the realization of those dreams set in what musicians call a minor key. The psalm calls us, in the presence of God, to lift up our dreams as well as our deepest desires and watch them come to reality. Pay close attention to how the words remind you of your own life experiences.

For many years, a favorite Christmas song has been the Appalachian carol,” I Wonder as I Wander.” It is a lament, a sad and wistful song. A prayer of sorts that offers both deep praise and thanksgiving to God – set in a minor key.

Part of its attraction is its emotional honesty about the coming Christ. Even though he is born, we are still irritable, hostile, and crabby. It makes us ask the question: *What difference did Jesus’ appearance on the earth really make?*

**Reflection Part 2:** Those who risked giving up the comforts of Babylon returned home to Jerusalem with the task of rebuilding. Generations had passed and those returning from the exile had never seen the Holy City. Destruction was all around them. Even so, they remembered their ancestors’ stories of Jerusalem’s former glory. Their return was a dream come true, but now what would their reality be?

The Exile was a sorrowing period, a period of death, both physical and spiritual. In that dying however, there was the promise of new life. Returning to Jerusalem was the highest possible joy for this new generation.

Our lives carry a similar rhythm. Disappointments, separations, and sometimes even spiritual exile are to be expected. If we allow ourselves a space to quietly “wait on the Lord” then, in God’s good time, our spirits will be renewed and the promised joy will follow.

**Prayer**: God during the days of Advent, may I be less irritable, less hostile and less crabby. Help me to live so others may see Christ’s appearance has made a difference in me.

And, grant me your wisdom God. Let me rest in your time, as I wait for a renewed spirit. Help me recognize the joy of resurrection and new life when it happens. Amen