

3rd SUNDAY of Advent
(Yr C)

Reading 1

Citation: Zephaniah, Chap. 3, Verses 14-18a
Zephaniah 3: 14-18a

You are Zephaniah urging his people to remember God's promise to send a Messiah. While the promise never had a delivery date Israel knew He would come. Zephaniah insists the Messiah is present (if only the people will see with eyes of Faith). We are those people. Lead your listeners to believe!

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah

Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! (there should be joy in your voice!) (short pause)
Sing joyfully, O Israel! (keep up the joyfulness)
Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! (more joy) (short pause)
The LORD has removed the judgment against you (very short pause)
he has turned away your enemies; (a little amazement!) (short pause)
the King of Israel, (excited) (very short pause)
the LORD, (some awe, here)
is in your midst,
you have no further misfortune to fear. (relief!) (Pause)

On that day,
it shall be said to Jerusalem: (very short pause)
Fear not, O Zion,
be not discouraged! (say each word separately) (very short pause)
The LORD, (awe) (very short pause)
your God, (more awe!)
is in your midst, (as unbelievable as this may sound!)
a mighty savior; (proud confidence) (short pause)
he will rejoice over you with gladness, (exulting) (very short pause)
and renew you in his love, (solicitous, compassion) (short pause)
he will sing joyfully because of you, (very short pause)
as one sings at festivals. (joy back in your voice)

The word of the Lord.

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Reading 2

Citation: Philippians, Chap. 4, Verses 4-7
Philippians 4: 4-7

Paul insists that the Lord is very near to us. That realization fills him with genuine joy. How excited he must have felt! Do you believe as Paul did? Can you project that same excitement, that same joyfulness? Be Paul!

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

Brothers and sisters: (Call for the attention of the Assembly!) (short pause)

Rejoice in the Lord always. (Be happy and joy-filled) (short pause)

I shall say it again: (Insistent) (Raise volume) (very short pause)
rejoice! (Can you be almost deliriously joyful?) (short pause)

Your kindness should be known to all. (Statement of fact, but said positively!)
The Lord is near. (Factual statement) (very short pause)

Have no anxiety at all, (Urging) (short pause)
but in everything, (almost a parenthetical expression)
by prayer and petition, (Strong commitment)
with thanksgiving, (almost a parenthetical expression)
make your requests known to God. (Firmly positive!) (short pause)

Then (very short pause)
the peace of God that surpasses all understanding (reassuring; confident) (very short pause)
will guard your hearts and minds (very short pause)
in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

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Gospel

Citation: Luke, Chap. 3, Verses 10-18
Luke 3: 10-18

The dialog tells the story. Be as expressive as possible – uncertainty and firmness; straight talk and warning; excited longing and insistent reverence. John says the Messiah is imminent! How would you feel if you were in the audience? Emotion runs high. Use it to make Luke's point that John is merely the messenger sent to get the people ready.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

The crowds asked John the Baptist,
"What should we do?"

(almost pleading)

He said to them in reply,
"Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none.
And whoever has food should do likewise."

(insistent)
(short pause)

Even tax collectors came to be baptized
and they said to him,
"Teacher, what should we do?"

(amazing!)
(desperate!)

He answered them,
"Stop collecting more than what is prescribed."

(be firm)

Soldiers also asked him,
"And what is it that we should do?"

(almost your disbelief?)
(genuine concern)

He told them,
"Do not practice extortion,
do not falsely accuse anyone,
and be satisfied with your wages."

(firm; warning)
"
"

Now the people were filled with expectation,
and all were asking
in their hearts
whether John might be the Christ.

(parenthetical)
(excited)

John answered them all, saying,
"I am baptizing you with water,
but
one mightier than I is coming.
I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals.

(slight increase in volume?)
(softer; voice goes down)

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

His winnowing fan is in his hand
to clear his threshing floor
and to gather the wheat into his barn,
but the chaff

(cautionary)
(almost parenthetical)

Proclamation Format

he will burn with unquenchable fire."

("I'm warning you!")

Exhorting them in many other ways,
he preached good news to the people.

(back to excitement & positiveness)

The Gospel of the Lord.