

# Meditations of the Heart - Reflections on the Scriptures

*Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*

Pastor Matt Cadora

Week of December 20, 2009

Throughout this Advent Season, much of the content of our weekly Meditations of the Heart have come from a two-volume book entitled "Letters of Faith Through the Seasons", compiled by Dr. Jim Houston. Dr. Houston personally gave these books to me for the purpose of sharing some of these letters with you, the congregation of Faith Presbyterian Church, in the hope that we might obtain a greater appreciation for the devotion of the saints who have gone before us in centuries past.

This week's meditation comes from the words of Joseph Hall (1574-1656), who served as the Bishop of Norwich and was also a moral philosopher who advocated the meditative life. In this letter, penned early in the seventeenth century, Hall answers a gentleman who had raised questions about the celebration of Christmas in the Christian calendar. His words give insight into how Christians of long ago celebrated this great day.

*"One would think there is every reason to celebrate these solemn feasts [of the church calendar] as having wonderful and unspeakable benefits, which these days serve. For instance, in the Feast of the Nativity, when the Angel brought the news of the blessed Birth to the Jewish shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day a Savior." If then, the report of this blessing was the best news of the greatest joy that ever was, or ever could be that ever happened to mankind, why should its commemoration be comparable? Where we conceive of the greatest joy, what should hinder us from commemorating it as joyful indeed? But, you may argue, the day confers nothing to the blessing. Every day we should receive with equal thankfulness as we remember all the time this inestimable benefit of the incarnation of the Son of God. So it can be argued a set anniversary day to do this is completely unnecessary."*

*"Know however, and consider that the All-wise God, who knew it fit that his people should every day think of the great work of the creation, as well as of the deliverance out of servitude, and should daily give honor to the Almighty Creator and Deliverer, yet ordained one day of seven for our special recognition of these marvelous works, as well as knowing how apt we are to forget those duties, and so charged us to specifically remember these events..."*

*"You also argue that the exact day is debatable, or even in December at all! I agree the day is not known... but it certainly occurred on a specific day; and no less sure we are that it was the happiest day that ever occurred in the history of the world. It is all the same to us whether it was this day or another. We content ourselves with this, that it has pleased the church for many hundreds of years to ordain this day for the commemoration of that transcendent blessing... Let it suffice that ever since the second century after Christ, this Feast has been ordained by the Church without contradiction, receiving many passionate reinforcements from the Church Fathers."*

Scripture Meditation: *And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

- Luke 2:7

Thought for the Day: May the festivities of this Christmas not crowd out the true celebration of the Christ child.

"Jesus is in my heart, his sacred name is deeply carved there"

- George Herbert, *The Temple*

---

Source: Houston, James M., *Letters of Faith Through The Seasons*, Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2006, p. 60-61. Reprinted by permission.