

December 14th – Tuesday

Centering Breath Prayer: Child of love...be my sign.

Opening Prayer:

Dear Baby Jesus, as I come to you today in this quiet time, I pray that I will be open to the signs of your wonder and love. I would ask that you open my heart to receive your love and that you would lead me to those who need to see signs of your love for them as well. Help me to seek your love in everyone I see. And help me find a sign for my heart within this special time we spend together today. In your loving name, I pray. Amen.

Scripture: Isaiah 7:10-14a

Key Verse: Isaiah 7:11: “Ask for a sign from the Lord your God to prove to yourself that these things are true. It may be a sign from as deep as the place of the dead or as high as the heavens” (NCV).

Signs from God. In years past when superstitions were more the norm than not, a sign from God could take many forms and they were often feared as much as sought. Many natural occurrences were taken as signs from God and were interpreted in many ways. The Old Testament gives several occasions when people sought a sign from God before embarking on a task they believed was from God, but wanted to make sure. One major example of this is Gideon's fleece. In Judges 6, Gideon is called by an angel of the Lord to deliver the Israelites from the Midianites and the Amalekites and other eastern peoples set upon the destruction of Israel even though Israel had been worshipping other gods. Gideon was not sure that God really meant for him to accomplish this and so he asked God for a sign. He put out a fleece and asked God to let only the fleece be wet with dew while the ground was dry. God did this and then Gideon asked once more for a sign by doing just the opposite as the first night. When God made the fleece dry while all the ground around it was wet, Gideon was finally convinced that God had called him to deliver his people and he obeyed God. Such signs are not usually sought in our day and age, yet we still like proof for our beliefs.

Jesus often encountered people who were seeking for signs and wonders in his ministry and though they received more than they could possibly need, they still asked for more. John 6:25-40 (especially verse 30) contains one account of such seeking in the midst of seeing such signs continuously! How could they fail to see that Jesus, himself, was the sign they were seeking? The shepherds were told to go to Bethlehem to see the Savior lying in a manger, God's sign to them according to the angels. Here in our scripture to today we find God, speaking through Isaiah telling Ahaz to ask God for a sign because his people were trembling in fear of invasion. Ahaz tells Isaiah that he will not ask for a sign, will not test God. Isaiah calls him perverse and says the Lord will give him a sign anyway. That sign will be the same sign that the birth of the Child of love signifies. God sometimes tells us to seek a sign. And the sign we seek is the Child of love, the one whose birth we are about to celebrate once more. Sometimes the signs of love we receive come in simple packages – in the love of a child, the purring of a cat,

the adoration of a faithful dog, the kiss of a spouse, the laughter of friends doing nothing really special but just being joyful in one another's company – the list can go on and on. But the most significant sign of all came in the form of the Child of love, the fulfillment of the sign Isaiah promised Ahaz so many years ago. Do we actively seek signs from God today? Perhaps not, yet we received the greatest sign of all in the birth of the Child of love. Let's take that sign with us on our journey of love.

Additional Scriptures: Judges 6:36-40; John 6:25-40; Luke 2:11-12

Questions for reflection and/or journaling:

1. Have I ever sought for a sign from God? What happened?
2. What signs of love have I recently encountered?
3. How was the birth of the Christ Child a significant sign of God's love for me?

Suggestions for action:

1. Phrase for your tree: **SIGN FROM GOD**
2. Keep a running count of all the signs of love you encounter throughout the day.
3. Take the time to give signs of the love you have for those you encounter today.
4. Reread the story of the shepherds in Luke 2:8-20

Closing Prayer:

Loving God, what a wondrous sign you sent in the Child of love, lying in a manger. As I go through this day may I see signs of your love around me and may I bring signs of love to those who cross my path along the way. As I travel along the journey of love this week, may I always seek you and honor the love which came with the Child of love, the Christ Child, my Lord and my Savior, Jesus, in whose name, I pray. Amen.