

and Holy Communion in the United Methodist Church are a means of receiving God's grace. They are meant to be a "thin place experience" of God's grace. Think about your experiences of baptism and communion. Have you ever experienced a deep sense of God's presence during those moments of worship? Meditate upon these ideas and write your thoughts here.

### **Thursday, December 11**

Read Revelation 3:14-22 and 21:1-4. For John of Patmos or John the Theologian as he is sometimes called, The Island of Patmos was his thin place. The Book of Revelation is sometimes called The Revelation to John; it is a vision that John experienced on the Island of Patmos. Local traditions say that John experience his vision in a cave on the Island. The language of the book is strange and attempts to describe the spiritual battle that occurs between good and evil in the world and describing the ultimate and final episode of that battle. As one seminary professor and author writes, "Revelation doesn't mean what it says, it means what it means." The study of Revelation and plumbing the depth of its meaning will never end. It definitely bears the dual message of judgment and hope. The second reading for today is a beautiful description that should give any believer hope. What are your prior experiences of reading Revelation? What do you think about Revelation after Sunday's Message? Contemplate these questions and write your thoughts here.

### **Friday, December 12**

The dual message of judgment and hope seems to hold tension in our lives. Consider one question today: What role does judgment play in our life and faith? Think deeply about this question today, because it will arise in subsequent messages during Our Advent Pilgrimage. Write your initial thoughts here.

## **Message Notes December 7, 2025**

### ***Our Advent Pilgrimage Destination: Jordan River and the Island of Patmos*** \*

- I. We have these two \_\_\_\_\_ on this Second Sunday in Advent, both named \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. These guys were \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus' time; and remember the prophetic tradition had been dead for \_\_\_\_\_ years.
    1. Both these men have something \_\_\_\_\_ to share with us as we continue Our Advent Pilgrimage.
    2. A big part of this series of messages are the \_\_\_\_\_ where our Biblical guides encountered God in wondrous and \_\_\_\_\_ ways.
  - B. Andy Langford and Ann Langford Duncan, write, "John the Baptist and John the Theologian, journeyed far from their homes to \_\_\_\_\_ places from which they proclaim messages from God."
- II. John the Baptist's prophecy, like the prophet Isaiah's message, was \_\_\_\_\_-fold.
  - A. That's because he had two different \_\_\_\_\_ he was addressing.
    1. To the \_\_\_\_\_ of his time, John directed a word of condemnation as he denounced their \_\_\_\_\_.
    2. For others, those truly \_\_\_\_\_ a deeper understanding of and relationship with God, he offered \_\_\_\_\_ for their \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. Let's talk about John of Patmos; His thin place was on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Patmos.
    1. Like Isaiah and like John the Baptist, John of

---

\*Matthew 3:1-8 and Revelation 3:14-22

Patmos offers a two-part message: \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_ in God's grace.

- a. First, John warns Christians as being \_\_\_\_\_ about their \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. We get lulled into the sentimental \_\_\_\_\_ of the Christmas Jesus.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ is not the final chapter of this story; there is \_\_\_\_\_ through God's grace.

- III. God's \_\_\_\_\_ from three different perspectives.
- A. Prevenient grace means grace that **precedes** our relationship with God.
  - B. Justifying Grace which is when we begin to \_\_\_\_\_ in God and \_\_\_\_\_ our lives with God's way. It is a moment of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. Then there is Sanctifying Grace which is the belief that God's grace \_\_\_\_\_ works in our lives.
  - D. We just can't remain \_\_\_\_\_ and be spit out of the mouth of Christ or risk becoming \_\_\_\_\_ that is thrown into the \_\_\_\_\_; I told you these guys were a little bit \_\_\_\_\_.
- IV. It may be a scary thing to realize that we \_\_\_\_\_ our God and Jesus the Christ.
- A. Here is good news that \_\_\_\_\_ has arrived in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Bethlehem.
  - B. Just like many you, I love the \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus, but beware, he \_\_\_\_\_ up!

## *Daily Devotional Guide*

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

### **Monday, December 8**

The Message began with the illustration from a movie that revealed several stages of Jesus' life and the character's preference of which Jesus to whom they would pray. The lead

character, Ricky Bobby, wanted to pray to the baby Jesus which he also called the Christmas Baby. When his wife confronted him, he told her that he'll pray to the Jesus of his picking and when she prayed, she could pray to "teenage Jesus or bearded Jesus or whatever." Consider the life of Jesus from which we could identify other types of Jesuses as well: angry Jesus (turning over the tables in the Temple) or sad Jesus (at the death of Lazarus) for example. Which Jesus do you prefer? Think deeply about his and write your reflections here.

### **Tuesday, December 9**

Read Matthew 3:1-8 and Revelation 3:14-22. The Jordan River and the Island of Patmos are "thin places" where both Johns encountered God. Thin Places can be physical space or experiences where the boundary between the physical and spiritual world is thin and permeable; they are spaces and times where and when we feel God's presence and can communicate with our God and Lord. Thin places can be a constant in a person's life or a one-time experience; there are no strict rules that determine what thin places are. Think about your experiences of God, both public and private. What are the thin places where you have felt close to God? Have you ever experienced God speaking to you in some way? Meditate on this concept of thin places, pray for God's insight and write your reflections here.

### **Wednesday, December 10**

Read Matthew 3:1-17. The Jordan River was the thin place from which John the Baptist preached and offered the baptism of repentance. People came from all around the region to receive the gift of God's grace and forgiveness and enter into a deeper relationship with our Creator and Savior. The Jordan River must have been a thin place for many, especially as Jesus was baptized and a voice from heaven proclaimed a blessing upon Jesus. What an experience that must have been! The sacraments of Baptism