

“3 ADVENT”
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The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. . . I will bring you home. Zephaniah 3:15, 20. Do not worry about things, but turn to God in prayer. Philippians 4:5.

I'm not sure you all know who this is. This is Frank Heffelfinger.



He lives in CA, in Los Angeles and he works as a janitor for Disney Internet Group at their office on Lankershim Blvd. And, more importantly, he is the father of Barabas. Barabas and Uncle Floyd live way far away in Camp Hill, PA. See them, 2500 miles away, way over there?!



Now, there is a whole story about Frank but I can't tell it all to you now. Some of you may remember that he was in jail for a long time. But now he is released from jail and starting a new life, far away from home and far away from his son.

EXCEPT . . he is planning to visit Camp Hill at Christmas! He is planning to see Barabas. It will be the first time in Barabas's memory that they have actually seen each other, face to face. Before, Frank has only written letters to Barabas. Last spring, when Frank was released from jail and before he left for CA, in the darkness of early morning on Easter, he went to Uncle Floyd's house and dropped off a gift for Barabas, that nice sleeping bag for camping that Barabas loves.

Frank is very excited about this trip home, but he is also very nervous. He loves his son, but what if his son does not love him in return. What if Barabas doesn't even LIKE him. What if Barabas will not even have anything to say to him. Maybe Barabas holds a judgment against him because Frank was an absent father. A father in JAIL! Frank is worried.

He paced around his apartment. That is what some people do when they worry. Pace . . . pace . . . pace. Worry . . . worry . . . worry.

Now, every Sunday Frank goes to church at Salem Lutheran in Glendale. And every week he brings home the bulletin and rereads the lessons, because he doesn't have his own Bible yet. As Frank paced, his eyes fell on the bulletin. He stopped his pacing and read the lessons.

In today's lessons from Zephaniah and from Philippians it says NOT to worry about things, but to turn to God in prayer. God has taken away the judgments against us. And God will bring us home!

"Home!" said Frank out loud to himself. "God will bring me Home!" Now, that probably means God will bring us home to heaven when we die, but right now, as Frank reads that, he sees that God is a part of his trip home to Camp Hill.

"The lantern!" said Frank. "I need to wrap Barabas's gift. I hope he likes it. He can use that when he goes camping!" Frank used the comics from the newspaper to wrap the gift because he doesn't have wrapping paper. He doesn't have much. And he found this old, kind of flat bow and taped it on the top.

"All this worrying about my trip home." thought Frank. "Instead of worrying, I should pray for God's help."



So Frank stood and prayed "Dear God, Please forgive the judgments against me. I am so sorry that I was not a better father to Barabas. Help me to be a good father from now on, even if I live 2500 miles away. And help Barabas and my brother Floyd to forgive me. And help me to not worry so much, because I know that You, God, are near. (Place Crucifix) And thank you for your son Jesus, the Savior who comes to bring us forgiveness. Amen!"

THE END