

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE (postponed from 12-24)**PSALM 24:3-4a
WITH CLEAN HANDS**

*Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart!*

Are your hands clean today? Shall I come around and check? ---- Does it ever happen that way at home? If you're going over to the neighbors to help in the barn, it doesn't matter. But if you're going to Grandma's to help with canning or, if you're going into town to see the doctor because of a bad wrist, your hands need to be clean. Of course, "clean" means different things to different people. To the girls, clean probably means no grease and oil from car repairs, and to the boys clean probably means not any perfume-y smell from soap!

But today I am talking about visiting the Lord. He's not just "some guy." He owns you and everything you have. He made everything in the entire world. He expects, it and you, to be well taken care of, clean, and right. It's not just dirt from the barn that He's concerned about, it's not just smears on your hands from paint, or dirt from the garden under your fingernails. He looks at the "dirt" of sin. Don't come to Him with the dirt of sin on your hands. No taking things that don't belong to you, no breaking things that aren't yours to break, no hitting or kicking to hurt or to harm, no words of dirt coming out of your mouth, no words of anger directed against your brother or sister, no wrong feelings growing in your heart—jealousy, greediness, pouting, stubbornness, disobedience, and rebellion. To stand before sinless, holy, and perfect God, you better be clean from sin. Our Psalm says:

*Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart!*

Do you have hands and heart clean enough on this morning to hear God say, "Fine! You're clean! Come into My house!" ? Rather, Isaiah says, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). God's eyes can see everything, not just big and little spots of dirt, but big and little spots of sin, even those you thought you hid away. God says to you and to me this morning, "Who's this dirtying up My place? Out of here! Out, out, out!"

It wouldn't be much of a Christmas, celebrating Jesus' coming to earth to visit you, when you know you will hear Him say, "You are dirty with sin! OUT!" But He's the very same Jesus who gives us clean hands and a pure heart—no sin! THAT is the reason why Jesus came. He came to take your dirt off you and put it on Himself, and to put His cleanness on you. There's a wonderful Bible verse--maybe you know it by heart. "The blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin" (I John 1:7). The Son of God came to this earth to die on the cross for you. In His suffering and death, you are clean! In Him you can ascend the hill into the Lord's presence. You can stand in His holy place--through Jesus you are clean. The dirt of sin wiped away and forgiven!

That is why we are happy to celebrate the coming of Jesus to this earth--whether it's December 24-25, OR January 8. That's why you are here to help serve as Pastor this morning. You get to tell your Dads and Moms, your Grandpas and Grandmas, your relatives, your friends, and all the church, that their dirt is gone! That through Jesus they are forgiven and acceptable to God—right now, and when they die and the Lord takes them to heaven.

As you entered church today, the congregation was singing:

*Kneel and adore Him with shepherds today.
Lift up little hands now, and praise Him as they.
Rejoice that a Savior from sin you can boast,
And join in the song of the heavenly host!*

With your little and big hands, clean as can be this morning, because of Jesus; and with your little and big hearts, clean as can be this morning, because of Jesus, may God bless you as you tell to all the good news of Jesus the Savior from sin!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---