

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us.

Luke 1:78



Copyright Robyn Sand Anderson

Tender mercy.

Those two words came to me the other night, when I wondered what I would write for this Advent blog. I let the beauty of those two words wash over me as I said each word with a pause after, so as not to rush the beauty that lies within them. Tender. Mercy. The *tender mercy* of our God. We don't hear about that side of God very often and so this verse from Luke 1:78 stands out. It is hard to take in this extraordinary gift. We cannot fathom it, really. But then. A baby was born to a common, young girl named Mary. In this birth we are promised that "...the dawn from on high will break upon us."

As I wrestle with all that is happening in our country, the anguish of those who have been separated from their children, the deceit and raw grab for power by some, the disregard for certain groups of people, the fomenting of hatred and violence, these words stand in deep contrast. Some equate the words *tender* and *mercy* with weakness. But here we see that in the midst of this turmoil, these words are strong with the promise that God so loved the world that God chose to speak to us of this Love in the form of a child named Jesus. And so we wait during this Advent season, and we open our eyes, our hearts and minds to what God is telling us in this place and time.

It is God's tender mercy, not vengeful, not punishing, but a tender mercy that is bestowed on us in our misery, in our sorrow, in our mistakes and blunders. And that Light will guide us and will seep into our darkness from on high. For God so loves the world. We are not abandoned, but are held in God's tender mercy.

As we turn to one another this season, where can we show the same to those we meet and know, to those who are persecuted now, to this beautiful planet that God has given us with all of its plants and animals? God promises we are not alone in this, but that God's Light is in, under, and over us as we seek to speak a word of love, mercy and justice in the name of Christ Jesus.

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us.