In the 1977 film Annie Hall (and I realize that I am dating myself, but I just want to give credit to the source), in the movie is the line, “Showing up is 80% of life.” If you are going to be a witness, to proclaim Jesus as Lord, then you definitely have to show up. And like the rest of the quote, you can spend your life in bed instead, but life and witness involve showing up. Witnessing involves showing up.

The Christian faith, and the Jewish faith from which it grow, show us a long arc of salvation.  As prophets of old, God showed up to them, and they responded by showing up to witness, to proclaim truth.  For Isaiah salvation is very much a communal manner. In order to be a Christian at any time, but particularly during the time of preparation in Advent, there is a push and tug for us to show up in order to witness. God is interested in salvation for all, so everyone is to witness. This underlying reason is the reason that Jesus comes to us, to witness to God. [Yes, of course, Jesus is the “reason for the season,” but in this season is Advent, it’s not only the anticipation of Jesus coming to us in the manger as a baby, but WHY Jesus comes in the first place is just as, if not so much more important,—-He comes to witness to God. ]

The psalm today gives us a view of what God showing up looks like.  God is always showing up, a witness to us that there is a God. God shows up, God shows up in good times and in bad. There is truth that sometimes the water of tears make for a  bountiful harvest. God shows up in the bad times. Sowing in the face of a threat or bad times is an act of faith, and a witness. God shows us good or bad; we then are to show up to witness to God, in good and bad times. That is the Good News, God shows up, no matter what—compelling us to show up.

And this was what John the Baptizer was about. John in the wilderness knew who he was in relationship to Christ. As incarnate beings, being the body of Christ in the world, we must know who we are to Christ.  As John was a witness of the one to come, the one for whom John is unworthy to untie the sandal, then we must know who we are to Christ as well. We are to be a witness of the one to come. We are to shine the light back into the world. God has witnessed to us, and we witness back Jesus our God into the world.  No cute cuddly animals in a stable, but divine light, present as the world was made.

This divine light is what makes it all look different, it’s what makes a life worthy of God. Rejoice always, there are good things in life, and the good things are God’s will too.

It is not all about you, but the one who calls you is faithful.  Within this big arc of salvation, there is the desire for relationship and there is a desire for wholeness. The last portion of the first letter to Thessalonika is a prayer for wholeness. And this is something God does— bring wholeness, not the Thelssalonians. This is something God does for us—bring wholeness, not us. This wholeness allows us to see, it allows the right discernment of prophets. It allows us to see John crying in the wilderness. It turns our hearts, so that our spirits can care for the marginalized.  Advent is a time to witness, to loosen the tongue and proclaim God’s abundant mercies, ever always making us, all of us, whole.

So if we are to show up, show up to witness, that is, what does that look like? And although I love to see you here, I don’t just mean showing up to church on a Sunday, What does showing up to God look like? God shows up for us all the time, how are we to show up for God every day, every hour, every minute? What does that look like?