

## Sunday Thoughts 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2020

### What is Advent?

As Ray reminded us last Sunday, we are now in the season of Advent. But what exactly is Advent? The word 'Advent' is derived from a Latin word which means 'coming'. It is a period of four weeks before Christmas when we remember **3 wonderful things** about the coming of Jesus. We remember that...

#### 1. Christ has come

This is the coming of Jesus which we probably think of first when we hear the word Advent. Just over 2,000 years ago Jesus the Son of God actually came to live in this world. We can become so familiar with the story that we lose something of the wonder of it, but John captures it very well in his gospel:

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14)* and in his first letter:

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched (1 John 1:1).*

The Son of God was actually here – people could see and hear him, and even touch him – and today we can still visit places where he lived and taught.

If you have visitors this Christmas, I'm sure you will make sure that you are ready for them, but when the Son of God came hardly anyone was ready to receive him, and in fact most people didn't even notice that he had come, not even religious people! Yet the wonderful truth is that He who deserves to be served by us came into the world to serve us, not only by his many acts of compassion and healing, but by dying an agonizing, humiliating death on a cross to save us. So pause and marvel at that during Advent, and thank him with all your heart, because if he hadn't been willing to come, you and I would be lost!

Let's sing our first hymn: Come behold the wondrous mystery

[Come Behold The Wondrous Mystery - Matt Papa - YouTube](#)

#### 2. Christ comes

Not only did Jesus come into the world long ago, but amazingly he is willing to come into our lives now, if we are ready to receive him. John wrote:

*He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:11-12).*

Usually when we invite visitors into our home we only give them access to the more 'public' rooms in the house. There are some rooms which we would probably prefer other people not to see, which are definitely out-of-bounds! But Jesus said

*If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (John 14:23).*

Jesus doesn't just pay us a quick visit, he comes to stay! Not just as a visitor, but as our Lord and Master. So during Advent let's ask ourselves: Are we willing to let Jesus come into every part of our lives, and even make some changes? Or are there areas where Jesus isn't welcome and we shut him out? As the old saying goes, 'If Jesus isn't Lord of all, he isn't Lord at all'.

Let's offer every part of our lives to the Lord as we sing our second hymn: Take my Life

[Take my life and let it be hymn - YouTube](#)

### 3. Christ is coming

It's wonderful that Jesus came into the world to save us, and now he is willing to come and live in our hearts, but the best is yet to come! One day he will return, and this time no-one will fail to notice him as he comes, not as a tiny baby, but as King and Judge.

It's terrible if a visitor arrives when we're not ready! The Bible doesn't tell us when Jesus will come again, but it warns us repeatedly (especially in Matthew chapters 24 & 25) that we need to always be prepared for his coming. During Advent we should be thinking about how ready we are for his return. Our readiness is shown by how we are living.

*You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.* (2 Peter 3:11-12).

#### Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, Thank you that although you know all the worst things about me, you were still willing to humble yourself by coming into this world as a helpless baby boy and dying an awful death on a cross to save me. Please help me to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is your love for me, and help me to love you in return.

Lord Jesus, Thank you that you want to make your home with me. You know how much I need your help to live a life which glorifies you. Please come and live in my life, and change me however you wish. Please show me if there are any parts of my life where I'm shutting you out, and help me to surrender everything to you, because I want to please you in everything, and I know that your will is best

Lord Jesus, Thank you that however dark the world may seem at the moment, I have a sure and certain hope that one day you are coming back. Please help me to be ready, so that when you come or call you will find me walking close to you and doing your will.

Let's look forward to the return of Jesus as we sing our final hymn: There's a light upon the mountain

[HOLYOKE-THERE'S A LIGHT UPON THE MOUNTAINS - YouTube](#)

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

#### Points for prayer:

- Pray that our nation will turn back to God. Pray that our national leaders will seek God's wisdom as they continue to make difficult decisions about covid-19 and Brexit.
- Pray for comfort and strength for those who have lost loved ones recently.
- Pray for those who are still struggling with ill health. Give thanks for those who are now recovering from illness.
- Pray for our young people. Pray for older people, especially those who may be on their own at Christmas time.
- Pray for countries like Syria and the Yemen who - on top of suffering poverty and injustice - are now faced with covid.

- Pray for one another at this time of Advent that we may have a fresh insight into the coming of Jesus and God's love for us. Pray that we will find ways encourage each other to walk with Jesus day by day.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, evermore. Amen

God bless you all,  
Eric