

WHAT IS ADVENT?

ADVENT,, IS ONE OF THE MOST GLORIOUS TIMES OF THE RELIGIOUS YEAR.

IT'S FILLED WITH SO MUCH HURRYING & ACTIVITY. THERE'S THE COOKING,, THE BAKING,, THE EATING OF ALL THAT GREAT FOOD,, AND,,, IT'S A TIME FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO GATHER TOGETHER,,, TO SHARE IN THE BLESSINGS OF LOVE AND JOY,,, THAT GOD HAS SO GRACIOUSLY BESTOWED UPON US,,, ALL YEAR LONG.

BUT WE MUST REMEMBER,, THAT ADVENT,,, IS ALSO A SPECIAL TIME OF THE CHURCH YEAR. IT'S A TIME FOR US,, TO HAVE AN EXCITING,, SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE,,

AS WE PREPARE FOR THE RETURN OF JESUS.

TODAY IS THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT,, THE START OF THE CHURCH YEAR! IT IS THE DAY THAT WE BEGIN TO LIGHT THE ADVENT CANDLES,, SING ADVENT HYMNS AND WE WAIT AND WE PREPARE.

ADVENT SEEKS TO TAKE US BACK TO SIMPLER TIMES,, WITH SO MUCH LESS OF THE FRANTIC PACE,, THAT'S THE SIGNATURE OF SO MANY LIVES TODAY.

WE CELEBRATE HOW JESUS COMES TO US IN THREE WAYS.

WE CELEBRATE THE FIRST COMING,, AT HIS BIRTH,, SOME 2000 YEARS AGO.

WE CELEBRATE HIS COMING AMONGSY US NOW,, MOST NOTABLY IN WORD AND SACRAMENT,,AND,,, *WE CELEBRATE HOW JESUS COMES AMONG US,, IN ONE ANOTHER,,* IN THE LEAST OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, AND,,

WE CELEBRATE JESUS' SECOND COMING,, WHEN HE WILL COME AGAIN,, TO JUDGE CREATION,, BRINGING IN A TIME OF PEACE AND JOY,, THAT IS SPOKEN OF SO ELOQUENTLY,, IN TODAY'S READING FROM ISAIAH.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, THE END IS COMING,, OF
THAT WE CAN BE SURE,, BUT WHEN?**

**OUR LITTLE CONGREGATION,, HAS BEEN TOUCHED
BY SEVERAL DEATHS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS.
AND THIS SERVES TO REINFORCE**

THAT WE DON'T KNOW WHEN,, OUR END IS COMING.

**WHEN EACH OF THESE PEOPLE WERE BORN,,
GROWING UP,, LIVING THEIR LIVES,, AND DOING
THE THINGS THAT CONCERNED THEM,, THEY HAD
NO IDEA,, THAT THAT DAY MIGHT BE THEIR LAST.
WE JUST DON'T KNOW,, AND WHAT'S MORE,,**

WE'RE NOT GOING TO KNOW!

**THERE ARE MANY WHO WANT TO KNOW,, WHEN THE
END WILL COME AND THEY SPEND A LOT OF TIME,,
TRYING TO DISCERN THAT MOMENT.**

**SEPTEMBER THE 11TH BROUGHT ABOUT ANOTHER
RASH OF PEOPLE,, ONLY TOO READY TO TELL US,,
THAT THE TIME IS HERE!**

**THESE THINGS HAVE BEEN GOING ON,, FOR
CENTURIES AND THEY WILL CONTINUE!**

**MOST OF THESE PREDICTIONS,, ARE ABOUT BAD
NEWS,, LIKE; EARTHQUAKES,, FIRE,, AND DISTRESS.
THE STUFF,, WHOSE SPECIAL EFFECTS MAKE GOOD
AND THRILLING MOVIES,, BUT,, THER'RE NOT TOO
GOOD FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES.**

**MILLIONS OF DOLLARS,, HAVE BEEN MADE,, ON THE
VARIETY OF BOOKS,, THAT HAVE BEEN SOLD,, EVEN
IN CHRISTIAN BOOK STORES,, ON THESE TYPES OF
SPECULATIONS.**

**THEY MAKE ALOT,, ABOUT THE END TIMES,, AND
THEY TRADE ON FEAR AND ANXIETY. THEIR BOOKS
ARE FICTION,, AND THEY MAY EVEN BE AN EXCITING
READ,, BUT,, THEY AREN'T BIBLICAL!**

**PERHAPS THEIR AUTHORS WOULD DO WELL,, TO
READ TODAY'S TEXT FROM MATTHEW?**

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, WE WILL NOT KNOW THE TIME THAT THE END WILL COME,,, AND TO ASSUME THAT WE CAN,,, IS TO PRESUME TO KNOW MORE

THAN DOES THE SON OF GOD!

TO WANT TO KNOW,,, IS LIKE US DECIDING TO STAND ALONGSIDE OF ADAM AND EVE,,, IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN,,, AND TO LONG FOR THE FRUIT OF THE TREE,,, THAT THAT WOULD ALLOW THEM,,, TO KNOW MORE THAN GOD MEANT THEM TO KNOW. WE SHOULD JUST TRUST IN THE WORD OF GOD AND KEEP SOME DEGREE OF INNOCENSE IN OUR LIVES!

A FEW YEARS AGO,,, I READ A HUMEROUS STORY BY A FELLOW CATHOLIC PRIEST,,, AND AS WE BEGIN OUR JOURNEY IN OUR ADVENT SEASON TOGETHER,,, I'D LIKE TO SHARE IT WITH YOU.

THE PRIEST,,, WHO WAS IN HIS EARLY 30'S AT THE TIME,,, TOLD ABOUT HIS BEING A YOUNG BOY,,, EAGER FOR A *TRANSFORMERS ACTION FIGURE*,,, FOR CHRISTMAS.

HIS PARENTS HAD A RULE! HE COULDN'T GET OUT OF BED,,, UNTILL 5 AM,,, TO WAKE THEM UP AND OPEN GIFTS. BUT THE YOUNG BOY,,, COULDN'T STAND IT,,, SO,,, AT 4 AM,,, HE SNUCK DOWNSTAIRS,,, AND WENT OVER TO THE TREE,,, TO HAVE A LOOK.

THE TREE WAS BEAUTIFUL,,, ALL LIT UP,,, WITH ALL THOSE PRESENTS UNDER IT.

SOME WERE JUST SOCKS AND UNDERWEAR,,, BUT,,, ONE LOOKED PROMISING,,, AND IT WAS MARKED WITH THE WORDS; "TO JOSHUA".

AGAINST HIS BETTER JUDGEMENT,,, HE PEELED BACK JUST A LITTLE BIT OF THE WRAPPING PAPER AND SAW THAT HE HAD RECEIVED; A "*DECEPTICON*". JUST AS HE HAD HOPED!

THRILLED,,, HE PUT THE WRAPPING PAPER BACK,,, JUST LIKE IT WAS,,, AND HE SNUCK BACK UPSTAIRS.

ABOUT AN HOUR LATER,, HE WOKE HIS PARENTS AND HEADED DOWNSTAIRS. MUCH TO HIS SURPRISE HE FOUND A NOTE FROM SANTA,, THAT EXPLAINED; THAT BECAUSE HE HAD PEEKED AT HIS PRESENT,, SANTA HAD TAKEN BACK,, ALL HIS GIFTS.

FATHER TOLD HIS CONGREGATION,, THAT HE HAD NOT CRIED THAT HARD,, ANY TIME IN ALL HIS LIFE.

IT TURNED OUT,, THAT IT WAS JUST A PRANK! YOU SEE,, THE BOY'S BIG BROTHER,, HAD SEEN HIS LITTLE BROTHER,, PEEKING AT HIS PRESENT AND HE HAD WRITTEN THE NOTE AND HID THE GIFTS. AFTER THE PRANK WAS OVER,, THE GIFTS CAME BACK OUT!

FATHER USED THIS STORY,, TO EXPLAIN THAT,, DURING ADVENT,, *CHRISTIAN'S WAIT IN EAGER ANTICIPATION,, OF THE GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS,, THE COMING OF JESUS!* BUT,, UNLIKE TOYS,,

IT'S OK,, TO TAKE A SNEAK PEEK.

IT'S OK TO PEEK,, BECAUSE,, GOD WANTS US TO ANTICIPATE, AND IT'S A PRESENT HE'LL NEVER TAKE AWAY FROM US!

THE DESIRE TO KNOW THE END,, IS VERY MUCH A PART OF OUR SOCIETY.

YOU SEE,, IF WE KNOW WHEN THE END WILL COME,, WE CAN DO,, WHAT EVER WE LIKE,, NOW.

IF WE KNOW THE END,, THEN WE CAN MAKE A FINAL *RUSH TO PREPARATION*,, BEFORE,, THE END COMES,, AND SO,, WE CAN DO AS WE LIKE,, NOW!

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, THE PROBLEM IS,, THAT WE DON'T KNOW,, WHICH OF US WILL LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE TODAY'S SUNSET!

TODAY'S TEXT FROM MATTHEW,, SPEAKS OF THE ORDINARINESS OF HIS COMING. PEOPLE WILL BE EATING AND DRINKING,, GETTING MARRIED,, BAPTIZING THEIR CHILDREN,, WORKING I N THE FIELD.

MARTIN LUTHER IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SAID,,, THAT IF HE KNEW,,, THE END OF THE WORLD WAS COMING TOMORROW,,, HE WOULD PLANT AN APPLE TREE THIS AFTERNOON. LUTHER WAS NOT GIVEN TO SPECULATION OF THE END TIMES. RATHER,,, HE FOCUSED ON THE PURPOSE OF THE WORLD,,, WHICH GOD INTENDS,,, FOR THE PRESENT TIME.

WHAT MAY HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, DOES NOT EXCUSE YOU,,, FROM WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF YOU,,, HERE AND NOW!

IF WE KNOW THE END IS NEAR,,, THE TEMPTATION IS,,, TO HOLD UP,,, IN A BOMB SHELTER,,, OR AN ARMED FORTRESS IN THE MOUNTAINS AND WAIT.

WE WOULD MOST PROBABLY,,, CREATE A MENTAL FORTRESS,,, OF *“US,,, AGAINST THEM”*!

INSTEAD,,, WE ARE TO LIVE WITH THE UNCERTAINTY OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN! BUT,,, WITHIN A CERTAINTY THAT JESUS CHRIST,,, IS IN THE MIDST OF IT RIGHT ALONG WITH US.

WHEN WE STOP TRYING TO *“FIGURE IT OUT”*,,, WE FIND THAT WE HAVE THE ENERGY TO LISTEN TO WHAT GOD IS CALLING US TO DO,,, TODAY!

ADVENT PREPARATION IS ABOUT REMOVING THE NOISE FROM OUR LIVES,,, SO WE CAN HEAR AND SEE THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST AMONG US TODAY.

ADVENT IS A TIME TO WATCH,,, SO WE DON'T MISS HIS COMING!

WE ARE TO LIVE IN CONSTANT READINESS ATTENTIVE TO JESUS,,, WHO GIVES US HOPE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, IF THIS WERE YOUR LAST DAY ON EARTH,,, WOULD YOU BE READY AND HOW WOULD YOU SPEND IT?

OUR PLACE OF WORSHIP,,, IN OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR CONGREGATION,,, HAVE BEEN VERY MUCH,,, ON MY MIND THIS PAST WEEK.

PAUL TELLS US NOT TO NEGLECT BEING TOGETHER.

WE NEED TO MAKE MORE TIME FOR GETTING TOGETHER,,, FOR WORSHIP AND WE NEED TO TAKE OUR TIME TOGETHER,,, SERIOUSLY,,, IN HOPE,,, JOY AND PREPARATION!

DURING OUR ADVENT SEASON WE ARE TO HEIGHTEN OUR AWARENESS,,, OF HIS COMING AND WE ARE TO LIVE IN THE LIGHT,,, OF THAT DAY,,, BEFORE IT APPEARS.

ADVENT IS A TIME TO REFOCUS AND REGROUP. CHRIST CAME AS A BABY,,, AND CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN,,, OF THAT WE ARE ASSURED.

AS WE BEGIN THE ADVENT SEASON,,, CHRIST COMES INTO OUR MIDST,,, AND THAT'S WHERE THE LIVING IS TODAY,,, IN CHRIST JESUS!

**TODAY,,, WE BEGIN THE ADVENT SEASON
– “PREPARING FOR THE REVELATION” ,,
THAT IS,,, THE FULL DISCLOSURE,,, OF JESUS,,,
IN THE JOY,,, SORROW,,, LAUGHTER,,, TEARS,,,
COMEDY AND THE TRADGEDIES,,, OF OUR DAILY
LIVES,,, HERE AND NOW.**

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, ARE YOU PROPERLY
PREPARED TODAY,,, SO THAT YOU CAN SAY:**

COME QUICKLY LORD JESUS,,, MY SAVIOR!

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,,, AND OF THE SON,,, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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1,474 WDS, 6 PGS

+++AMEN+++

1492 Wds, 6 Pages