

“Get Ready, Be Excited”

The Gospel Lesson for today is read from John 18:19-40

Hear the words from the disciple Luke:

Read Luke 21:25-36

“The Word of God for the people of God.”

“Thanks be to God”

Let us pray:

Lord, by Your grace may I be given Your words, Your message to proclaim fearlessly. As I prepare to speak Your message, inspire my words by Your Holy Spirit and give them life. Intercede my vocabulary and speech so that all who hear it do not hear me, but instead, hear You. Use these words I speak as an instrument, O Lord, to help others see truth in Your Son. In Jesus Christ’s name, who came to make your message perfectly clear – and perfect. Amen.

Intro:

Growing up in the church, I never asked questions about what I was learning. I never asked questions because questioning the Holy Scripture was blasphemous, it was borderline heresy. But, at a certain point in my faith I began to feel this need for answers, for proof. So I asked God for signs of His existence. I desperately needed to stumble upon a burning bush. Although, I never happened to stumble upon a burning bush like Moses did, God did reveal Himself to me, and continues to show me just how near the kingdom really is.

Maybe you’ve asked for this proof in your own life? Maybe you’re still asking?

In our Gospel reading for this first week of Advent, Jesus assures us there will be signs given to us.

In the prophetic language that sounds distressingly contemporary, Jesus describes a world reeling in pain.

There will be Signs:

In the sun, moon, stars.

On earth, distress among the nations, confusion over the surging seas.

Even the powers of heaven will be shaken.

People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world.

Signs will not have to be predicted or debated. The signs will be so big and so evident no one could mistake them.

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It kind of sounds like we may be in the end times, as some of these signs we’ve seen and heard before.

Yes, there is war, and famine, and poverty, and natural disasters – but this is nothing new. These things come and go, kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall -but yet God is still with us. What is more striking is Jesus saying, even the earth and heaven will fade into existence, but the Word of God will always remain true. Holding true to a promise he gave to Abraham all the way through to King David and still through Jesus Christ, Our Savior, Emmanuel. Jesus is the promise to us.

THEN:

You will see the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of man, in a cloud with great power and splendor

“When you see these things,” Jesus says, don’t turn away. Don’t hide.

When you see these signs: “Stand up and raise your heads, because redemption is near.”

That’s what Jesus is really getting at in this passage, after all: he is not offering these apocalyptic signs in order to scare the pants off of us but rather to assure us that the healing of the world is at hand, and that we need to stay awake, stay alert, and learn to read the signs of what is ahead. He is calling us not to crumble when intimations of the end come but instead to “stand up and raise your heads, because redemption is drawing near.” Jesus urges his hearers—and us—toward practices that help them stay grounded and centered in their daily lives so that they won’t be caught unawares in the days to come.

Jesus’ Action Plan For Us Is through Advent is:

Stay Alert,

Get Ready,

Be Excited for your coming redemption and eventual dwelling in the presence of the Lord, which has always been God’s intent for creation

Don’t let this Advent, this Coming of the Lord, surprise you like a trap.

What to do when the chaos begins? **Lift up and lift up your heads.**

Can you find hope in the midst of devastation? When all the signs seem to be pointing to catastrophe, is it possible to see the hope? As we begin the time of Advent, the preparation for

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the celebration of Christmas, can we start to see the world through Advent eyes? The signs of disaster are easy to see. Can we see the signs of hope? When there is death and destruction, can we “Stand up straight and raise your heads, because your redemption is near.”

This is the Good News! That there is Advent! If there was no Advent, if there was no Christ coming into the world then we must ask what is at stake?

What is at stake is that there would be

no birth,

no life,

no baptism,

no death,

no resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Which means what was coming to us without Advent was death and eternal separation from God.

ADVENT IS THE PROMISE AND LOVE OF GOD TO US IN REVEALING HIMSELF

THROUGH HIS ONLY SON JESUS CHRIST SO THAT IN HIS LIFE, DEATH, &

RESURRECTION WE MIGHT BRIDGE THE GAP AND BE SAVED AND HAVE ETERNAL

LIFE.