

Advent #1

11-28-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Advent is about the ‘coming days’ God’s People have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a ‘righteous Branch to spring up for David.’ The Thessalonians awaited ‘the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.’ Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time ‘to stand before the Son of Man’ with them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Fling Wide the Door”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-10

“To thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

²O my God, in thee I trust,

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

³Yea, let none that wait for thee be put to shame;

let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴Make me to know thy ways, O Lord;

teach me thy paths.

⁵Lead me in thy truth, and teach me,

for thou art the God of my salvation;

for thee I wait all the day long.

⁶Be mindful of thy mercy, O Lord, and of thy steadfast love,

for they have been from of old.

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth, or my transgressions;

according to thy steadfast love remember me,

for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord!

⁸Good and upright is the Lord;

therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

⁹He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.

¹⁰All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.”

Hymn of Praise: [“All People That on Earth Do Dwell”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God now and forever Jesus. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Jeremiah 33:14-16](#)

2nd Reading: [1 Thessalonians 3:9-13](#)

The Gospel: Luke 21:25-36

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+21%3A25-36&version=NRSV>

Hymn of the Day: [“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”](#)

(The second week’s Angel Tree results will be sent later today)

The Message: ([Video Link](#))

For many history is a word which is irrelevant to anybody living in the present and preparing for the future. You just do not live in the past so why in the world would you even think about history and the past? We have outgrown the antiquities of the past with much more knowledge and technological advancements. The only problem with this kind of thinking is that basically human nature never seems to change or given a chance to change without learning from the mistakes of the past. With all of our supposed intellectual superiority over the past we still make the same self-serving mistakes which have brought society after society, culture after culture, nation after nation to its downfall. But, history is irrelevant?

Let's take for example the time period of around 600 BC. The Kingdom of Israel had long been split by political division leaving the remaining southern kingdom of Judah which was located in to then tumultuous region of the Middle East. At this time the feared power was that of Babylon for their military might was quickly seizing the entire region.

Internally the Kingdom of Judah was experiencing a ruling class which was not only corrupt and self-serving but had done everything but endorse the worship and practices of the god Baal. They no longer had the interest of their Kingdom and its citizens at heart. It was self above the Kingdom. Any thought of patriotism among the leaders was summed up in the preservation and enhancement of self and not the welfare of the nation.

The prevailing actions and inactions of its leaders to meet the needs of the people of the Kingdom by being totally immersed in self-interests became the life style of the kingdom itself. Everyone was smitten by this way of life. Therefore, the division among the haves and have not deeply divided the people. Jeremiah proclaimed, "My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick. Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: 'Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her king not in her? (Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their foreign idols?) The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me."

The chosen people whose ancestors found favor with God had gone far astray and their nation and society was doomed by their own making. The entire society had been corrupted to the point that Jeremiah proclaimed, "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look around and take note! Search its squares and see if you can find one person who acts justly and seeks truth- so that I may pardon Jerusalem."

Judah was a kingdom which had almost completely gone astray and was therefore vulnerable to the outside world. When self-overtakes the common good of all there is no longer the strength of unity of purpose and hope for the future is only a fantasy or wishful thinking. Therefore, there was little hope for Judah upon the invasion of the Babylonians. Judah was taken and the city of Jerusalem, along with its temple, was destroyed. Many of the Jews were taken hostage and dispersed into foreign lands. They were too self-indulgent to heed God's warning through the prophet Jeremiah and thus suffered the consequences.

This period of ancient history should have been a warning to the many times the same scenario has taken place, but by ignoring the truths of history mankind has time and again fallen into the same trap of self-indulgent leadership and societies and found the hopelessness and despair which followed. It is the story of the rise and fall of great kingdoms, empires, and nations. History continually repeats itself and mankind continues to disregard the lessons which it teaches.

You may think that today we would have learned the lessons of the past. But, think again. The description of the ancient kingdom of Judah could very well be the description of our own nation and society of today. We have a government which is so divided by self-indulgent and corrupt influences that the overall good and well-being of the nation is being ignored. In many respects the capitol is being run by the wishes and dictates of money interests without any regards to the people it is supposed to be serving. Tragically this has become a way of life throughout society. Self-indulgence has become the Baal of daily life among a growing number within the nation's population. Jeremiah's words could be very relevant by just changing one word. "Run to and fro through the streets of Washington, look and take note! Search its squares and see if you can find one person who acts justly and seeks truth – so that I may pardon Washington."

Some would say it is all hopeless. But, that is not the case. Even in those horrific times during the Babylonian exile, God through Jeremiah gave hope for the future. The impossible would be turned into a promise of the exiled Jews returning to their homeland. Just listen again to Jeremiah, "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety."

Yes, there was hope given even during the darkest of times. That hope turned into a reality for the Jews did return to their homeland, Judah, and Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt. This was to be a new beginning in which there would be the possibility of leadership which would love and promote justice and righteousness. It was a fresh start to the Jewish people but one which would not be able to shake the bonds of not being a free and independent kingdom. Even at that they were able to freely worship their God and to uphold the ancient covenants. They could be that shining example of righteousness and justice.

But there was still the fulfillment of being restored to a free and independent kingdom under the leadership of the ancestry of the House of David. Of course this did not occur for the hundreds of centuries to follow. The people never gave up the hope of the prophets and kept looking for that person chosen by God to bring the new kingdom into reality. This would be the long sought Messiah who would bring the justice and righteousness to the new Kingdom of Israel.

It is in this context that we begin the season of Advent. Like the Jews who continue to prepare for the coming of their Messiah so too we set this time before Christmas to prepare for the coming of Jesus, the Messiah of the new covenant with God. This is first revealed to us through the historic Nativity of Jesus which gives the Good News of God's eternal love for us. As John the Baptist proclaimed through the words of Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Our hope for the future is that which is promised to us through the Good News of the Nativity. It is the promise of God's love within His eternal kingdom. The reality of this promise comes through being prepared to receive it. Jesus gives a forewarning about this preparation, "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." To be prepared gives us the hope of God's promise of love, justice, righteousness, and peace and the assurance that we not fall into the trapped of reliving the past mistakes of history. Advent in many respects is a season of hope since we are preparing our way to the manger. May this hope resound throughout our lives with the renewal of the birth of Christ and the good news of the gospel.

Anthem: ["Bring Us Hope"](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Ever present God throughout all ages, in the midst of uncertainty and discord we enter the time to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. May examine our past so as to learn from our mistakes and our successes in order to more effectively witness to the love you have shown us. May we have the compassion and love to share the abundance which we may have so that others in need may find the joy of the gift of life. We continually pray that those who are suffering from Covid find relief and healing.

Send you comforting and healing presence especially with, Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, Kraig Greff, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family,, Della, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Pastor Jack

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"](#)

Announcements

All services are being held indoors in the sanctuary. Masks and social distancing is required.
Advent Family Night, Saturday December 4th at 5:00 Pm. Food and Christmas Craft making.
Community Caroling Night at the Outdoor Chapel. Sunday December 19th. 6:00 PM

*Offering and World Hunger Contributions to be sent to

Robert Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291