



We Are an Advent People!

We are always an Advent people who feel the distant past and the dim future tugging urgently at the present. We join with John the Baptist, Isaiah, Mary and the entire Christian community in the experience of waiting for the Lord.

By: Carol Lurbering

LEADER:

Advent is the season of God's nearness, a time to celebrate the presence of the One who comes to His people. But God does not live in time. Before the sun first rose, He was. And when the star by which we mark time has burned out, He will remain. Nevertheless, He who transcends time has submitted Himself to it. God has entered human history, has touched time and changed it, made it holy.

Viewed in the light of God's eternal now, the events of the distant past and the dim future are one event, the one great saving act He performed for His people. The participants in this one event are the people who have experienced his nearness in any age. The anxiety of John the Baptist, the hope of Isaiah, the attentiveness of the Virgin Mary, the impatience of the early Christian community is all part of that experience, the point of perception where the lives of those people touch the lives of believers today.

SONG: Here Comes the Sun (The Beatles) YouTube

Here comes the sun (doo doo doo doo)
Here comes the sun. and I say
It's all right.

Little darling, it's been a long cold lonely winter
Little darling, it feels like years since it's been here
Here comes the sun
Here comes the sun, and I say
It's all right

Little darling, the smiles returning to the faces
Little darling, it seems like years since it's been here
Here comes the sun
Here comes the sun, and I say
It's all right

Sun, sun sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun.....

READER 1 – John the Baptist; The Anxious Herald

John the Baptist emerges from the desert. His sense of God's nearness drives him out and fills him with urgency and anxiety. He is a strange sight to the people dressed in his camel's hair tunic that is rough and unkempt. His eyes are piercing and his message strident. However, people come to the riverbank. They are curious. If God is approaching, then their house must be put in order.

John does not send them to the mountain top, but he turns them back to the ordinariness of their daily lives. "If you have two coats, share with him who has none. Cheat no one; be content with your pay. Everything is going to be different from now on. The reign of God is at hand!"

It is with these words, "The reign of God is at hand!" that John touches a memory and set it resounding into the hearts of these Jewish people. He brought to mind the words their ancestors have cherished for generations. It is hope that draws the people present into the waters of the Jordan for John's baptism.

REFLECT:

Take an honest look at your own readiness to meet the Lord.

Take the first step to healing an old estrangement.

Help the world prepare for the Lord's coming by volunteering with groups in the community who reach out to the poor.

READER 2 – ISAIAH: Songs of Hope

Isaiah is heard across the centuries. The book of the prophet Isaiah is the work of many authors, a medley of voices speaking warning and comfort to Israel. One voice rises above the others, the voice of consolation:

He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly,
to heal the broken hearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
To announce a year of favor from the Lord
and a day of vindication by our God.

Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low;
The rugged land shall be made a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all mankind shall see it together.

Out of the pain of their loss the voice of the prophet rises. He sings of God's nearness when he seems so distant. He sings of God's faithfulness.

REFLECT:

Imagine how Isaiah's words must have sounded to Jews in exile. How does he speak to refugees today?

READER 3 – MARY: Attentive Intimacy

The virgin Mary is the most familiar and most appealing figure to appear in the advent liturgy. Christians of every age have lovingly tried to capture her in word and picture, for no one else has known so intimately the nearness of God. In her own body He took flesh. The mystery of pregnancy fills her waiting with attentiveness. From the first faint fluttering to the late lurchings, she marks the growth within her body as women touched by the miracle have always done, with wonder. Mary's acquiescence to God's will enabled Him to dwell among His people as one of their own kind.

The angel said to Mary; "Do not be afraid, Mary; God loves you dearly. You are going to be the mother of a son, and you will call him Jesus. He will be great and will be known as the Son of the most high. The Lord God will give him the throne of his forefather, David, and he will be king over the people Jacob forever. His reign shall never end." Luke 1 31-34

REFLECT:

Where and with whom have you experienced the Lord's presence this week.

Plan to thank someone (s) who always reveal the Lord to you.

Think of a way you can carry the Lord to others.

SONG: Set Your Hearts on the Higher Gifts (Steve Warner) YouTube

Chorus:

Set your hearts on the higher gift.

On the things that come from your Maker in heaven.

These three gifts are all that remain:

Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.

If I speak with the tongues of the living,
And of angels, but speak with out love,
I am only brass without song,
And my empty noise on the wind. **CHOURS:**

And if I understand every mystery,
Having wisdom but think without love,
Had I faith to scatter the hills,
I am nothing at all. **CHORUS:**

And if I should renounce all my riches,
Feed the hungry, give over my life;
Without love my profit is loss,
My caring finds no reward. **CHORUS:**

SHARING AND DISCUSSION: How can we be Advent people in today's world?

PITITIONS and PRAYER:

RESPONSE: Awaken my heart to a new understanding of you.

LEADER: May we always be alert for signs of Jesus being with us, being with me.

LEADER: Grant us the ability to quiet ourselves to recognize Jesus' quiet presence always with us.

LEADER: May we recognize the possibilities and the challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.

LEADER: Help us to be less fearful of the presence of time and more fully alive in the time that simply is.

LEADER: Give us the strength to renew our efforts toward building the Kingdom of God.

LEADER: May we always recognize the call to be more generous, to renew our heart of giving, to open ourselves, and to make the way smoother for others.

ALL: Lord, we pray. You are a gift to my life. Awaken in my heart a new understanding of You in today's world. You are my gift of hope in my hopelessness and anxieties. You are my gift of faith in my unbelievable moments and frustrations. You are my gift of love in my darkness and silences. Let me be your light to the world. Amen.

Offer a sign of peace!