

Advent Sunday 2017

Advent is an annual season of patient waiting, hopeful expectation, soul-searching, and calendar watching marked by many churches, individual followers of Jesus. There's no biblical mandate to observe Advent. It's an optional thing - a tradition that developed over the course of the church's history as a time of preparation.

The English word "Advent" is from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming."

The advent primarily in view each December seeks to prepare us to celebrate the first coming of Jesus 2,000 years ago but also Jesus's second coming sometime in the future....



Watching and Waiting ... Actively....

*"No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.** It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back - whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. **What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'**" (Mark 13:32-37, NIV)*

What to do while we wait...

1. Embrace it:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28, NIV)

2. Ask the right questions:

Not, "Why can't this hurry up?" or even "Why is this taking so long?"

But better questions are: "What can I learn while I am waiting?" or "how will this kind of waiting make me stronger?"

Ask questions and seek God....

(1 Chronicles 16:11, 22:19, 28:9 / Psalm 27:8 / Isaiah 34:16)

"Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:2-5, NLT)

3. Redeem the time:

"Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." (Ephesians 5:15-17, NIV)

4. Encourage someone else:

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV)

5. Trust God:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me..” (John 14:1, NIV)

Conclusion....

We must wait but wait....
With action not lethargy
With purpose not frustration
With trust not worry ...
With boldness not timidity
With passion not indifference
With purpose not
With desire not dread.....
With hope not fear.....

In actively waiting we can say with excitement and awe:
“He may come today.....”

Talk and Think It Through

Talking and thinking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps.

What’s the longest thing you’ve waited for? How long?
How do you get on when normally waiting?

With your Bibles read the passages, reflect about waiting and.....

Embracing it:

- Can any waiting be good? What can you do to make it good?
- If you’re waiting for something - could it actually be a gift from God?

Asking the right questions:

- Do you tend to ask negative or positive questions when waiting?
- What would it mean for you to “seek the Lord” in your questions while waiting?

Redeeming the time:

- Is your time wisely spent? Especially when you’re waiting?
- Do you give enough time and energy to growing as a disciple of Jesus?

Encouraging others:

- Do you try to get to know people outside of your immediate friendship group in church?
- How can you encourage someone while you wait?

Trusting God:

- How has God shown His timing already when you’ve been waiting? If so how and when?
- Is it a reassurance or a worry that that Jesus is coming again?
- Some of the central requirements of a disciple are to remain active, engaged, alert and watchful? Are you fulfilling these roles while waiting?