

Our Sermon today can be called: **Waiting**

Today marks the first day of the New Christian Year which is called the first Sunday of Advent.

Advent means coming. The focus of these next four weeks is 2 fold. One, we are waiting for the celebration of the Birth of Jesus or Incarnation and Two, we are anticipating His Second Coming.

Purple has been designated for this season by the church to represent royalty for the coming of the King.

Today we focus on **waiting**.

Isaiah, a prophet to both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, 900 years before Jesus prophesied the coming of the Lord and tells us what he is like. Isaiah is like a Bible in that the first 36 chapters focuses on the OT and the next 27 verses look toward the NT. Our reading is Isa. 7:14, 40:3-5, 53:4-6. Our NT reading is from Paul's Letter to the church at Ephesus. Eph. 2:4-9.

Waiting! That is **not** one of our favorite words. Who likes to wait? In a checkout line at the supermarket, wait for water to boil, in an airport when the monitor say our flight has been delayed, in the doctor's office when our scheduled time was an hour ago, for the doctor to get back to us on the results of a biopsy? For most of us we could do without waiting.

My son Craig used to wait for me in front of the Coolidge Kindergarden Class out on the curb. There would be a group of kids waiting for their parents to pick them up after school. But on several occasions Craig would be the only one waiting. I'd say Craig I'm sorry, I got busy or I was visiting someone in the church. He would usually say, "Thats OK Dad."

But, waiting can have good qualities like preparation, anticipation & hope. Like waiting nine months for a baby to be born. We wait for a seed to grow into a tree. And then we wait for the tree to bear fruit. We wait for healing after surgery. This is significant in that it allows time to anticipate the final outcome, or time to change us or to learn until a time for testing.

Simeon, who worked at the Temple in Jerusalem, was a righteous and holy man. It was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Lord. He was an old man and had waited long but Jesus was reveled to him.

We are **waiting** for Jesus to come again to Bethlehem for this Christmas season but also for Him to come for His Second Coming. **But why did God come the first time?**

I'd like to focus on Three Reasons why this occurred.

- I. To Show Us What He is Like
- II. To Forgive Us Our Sins
- III. To Give Us Hope for Heaven

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I. First, He came to show us what He is like.

The word incarnation comes from the greek word, incarnate. Which means, God in the flesh. The God of heaven came to live among us that we might know what He is like.

1. He is Approachable.

As you remember, in Mark 2:1-12, the four friends and the healing of their paralyzed neighbor. They felt Jesus was approachable, that they could carry their friend upon the roof, open up a hole large enough to lower him down at the feet of Jesus for complete healing.

As we read in Luke 2, God came as a baby born in a stable in a manger on a bed of straw. The Angels, God's messengers, came to the Shepherds, the most lowly in society, to tell them about Jesus. And the Star over Bethlehem was shown to the Three Kings the wealthiest in the land. He is approachable to all walks of life.

And another, is when Jesus came into Jerusalem on a donkey where even the children could run up to him. He could have ridden a stallion like a king yet He chose to humble Himself. He is **approachable**.

2. He is Relatable.

In Matthew 4:1-11 we read about how Jesus' was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. God sent Jesus in order to relate to His people and struggle with temptation. Even though he never sinned.

We read in Philippians 2:7-8 where it says, "He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!" He is **relatable**.

God came to show us what He is like.

II. Second, Why Did God Come? He Came to Forgive Us Our Sins.

Death is God's consequence for sin, as stated in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death". Paul said in Romans 7, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Then in a verse or two later he says, "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

There is a story which happened in the SUMMER 1937 MISSISSIPPI:
Rail bridge operator John Griffith took Greg, his eight year old son, to work with him. Greg was interested in his father's work, so he brought his son to work so he could see what it is like being a bridge operator. The boy poked around the office and asked dozens of questions - just like little boys do. The bridge stands over the great Mississippi River and whenever a ship came, John would open the bridge to allow the ships to pass. However, on this day after John opened up the draw bridge to allow a ship to pass. A moment or two later, he realized his son wasn't in the office and as he looked around, to his horror, and saw his son climbing around on the gears of the draw bridge. He hurried outside to rescue his son, but just then he heard a fast approaching passenger train, the Memphis Express, filled with 400 people. He yelled to his son, but

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the noise of the now clearing ship and the oncoming train made it impossible for the boy to hear him. John realized his horrible dilemma. If he took the time to rescue his son the train would crash killing all aboard, but if he closed the bridge, the boy would be crushed in the gears! John chose to sacrifice his son. After making the unfathomable decision, the father pulled the lever and closed the bridge. It is said, as the train went by John could see the faces of the passengers, some reading, some even waving, all of them oblivious to the sacrifice that had just been made for them. John began to weep crying out, "Don't you people realize that my son was sacrificed for your life!?" To the best of my knowledge, the above story is true. It illustrates for us an eternal truth.

One of the most widely known scripture is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

God came to show us what He is like
God came to forgive us of our sins.

III Third, Why Did God Come? He Came to Give Us Hope For Heaven (Eternal Life).

We read throughout the Bible about God's hope for heaven and how nothing else compares:

I Cor. 2:9 "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." The earth and our bodies are temporary; heaven is home. Christ makes it plain that his primary objective in coming into this world was to "save" and to give "eternal life."

Jesus said, His Father is in heaven. He said that no man can come to the Father but by faith in Him. He repeatedly spoke of eternal life and the necessity of being prepared for it. He made it plain that sin separates us from God, now and for eternity and yet believing in him as the Son of God and Savior from sin, heaven awaits. It is a glorious hope, the hope and destiny of every Christian. Jesus tells us that there are many "mansions," "rooms," "dwelling places," in heaven. No matter how one interprets the word, the fact is that our Lord is even now preparing a dwelling place for those who are his own, and that it will be our permanent address.

God came to show us what He is like
God came to forgive us of our sins.
God came to give us hope for heaven!

In closing, as we wait for His next coming and enter this new season of Advent hold tight to God's promises and remember why He already came:

To Show Us What God is Like
To Forgive Us Our Sins
To Give Us Hope for Heaven

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