

The Purpose for His Coming

12/13/2020; 3rd Sunday in Advent – Germantown;

Advent:

The season of Advent challenges us to not just remember a baby that was born to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. Advent calls us to a time of reflection and contemplation about that child. Advent challenges us to slow down, even to stop the torrid pace of our lives for some moments of rest. Taking time for contemplation and prayer is a deliberate choice. It is to be intentional. It should not come as an “after-thought”, or just observed as a cold ritual or habit. We schedule it into our day, just as we do other items that must be accomplished.

The Advent Wreath

As the season moves forward toward Christmas, the light on our Wreath grows brighter. Three of the candles on the wreath are purple. Color has always been used in times of worship to express certain messages. Color stimulates our mind to think of certain realities. Purple is a color of royalty. The season of Advent is a Somber season, a season for reflection and repentance. Repentance can bring feelings of regret, even tears of sorrow. When we arrive to the 3rd Sunday, the mood of the season turns in a new direction. The mood is more upbeat and joyful.

So today we light the third candle on our Advent wreath – the **candle of joy**. The 3rd candle is Pink, representing Joy. It is brighter. We are not to be permanently overwhelmed by feelings of guilt and shame. Grief is followed by relief. Joy comes because we know that our Savior has come to bring forgiveness and grace.

Reading: **Isaiah 35:1-10**

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we love the picture of You that Jesus paints for us in the story of the Prodigal Son. You ran with great joy, exuberant joy to greet your wayward child and welcome Him home. And you restored Joy to His heart by your response to Him. We pray that you will help us to capture that Joy as we celebrate this Season. Thank you for offering us grace, forgiveness and mercy again, even though we are prone to wander from you. There is a reason to celebrate when you offer us the possibility of a clean slate. Amen

Scripture

John 1:1-18

Message

The Purpose for His Coming

What are some words that you would use to characterize the way you relate to God?

- The man upstairs?
- On speaking terms?
- The Big Santa Claus in the Sky?
- Intimacy – Know and Known?
- As a subject to a king?
- As a child relates to their parent (negative)?

One of the realities that we learn from John is that we are not destined to go through life interacting with God as some impersonal deity that we can't get close to. We can experience the intimacy of an adoring child being loved and cared for by a perfect, loving Father whose love for us is unconditional. Maybe you had good parents who loved and cared for you. You know what it is like to be loved, to have a safe relationship with a Father and Mother. But for some, that was not a reality. You have a longing in your heart for such a relationship. Jesus offers that to all.

We have been looking at this Prologue to John's gospel during these weeks of Advent (verses 1-18). John's purpose is to help us to know Who Jesus is, and Why He came into the world. In the first 5 verses, John talks about Jesus as the Word. He tells us that Jesus as the Word existed already in the Beginning. He was with God. He is God. He was present and active in creating the world . And he tells us that Jesus brings light into

a world that is characterized by darkness. John wants people to know that Jesus is the Promised Messiah, the Son of God, the one we should believe in in order to experience life, real life..

In the 2nd paragraph, John introduces us to a witness who will corroborate John's testimony about Jesus. John the Baptist. That witness has been sent by God, so his witness is authoritative, reliable and true. John's ministry of preaching was very powerful. He rebuked. He identified sinful practices. He called people to repent, to turn from their sin to God. Because of the nature of John's preaching, there were people who suspected that he might even be the one that God promised to send into the world as the Messiah. People came and asked him if he was the one. In verse 5, John (the author) refers to the Word – Jesus – as the Light. John responds by declaring that he himself was not the Light that God was sending into the world. He was only a witness. He was one who was pointing others to Jesus and encouraging people to believe in Him.

That response from John provides a Segway to the paragraph that we are looking at today. (**Vs. 9 – 13. The True Light** – As I said some suspected that John was the Light from God, but now we learn that there is another, who is referred to as the True Light as opposed to a light that was false. Jesus is genuine. He will bring the light of truth about God to everyone.

One of the important themes in the Bible is that God comes. If we go back to the story of the fall of man into sin, after Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they heard the sound of God coming to them in the Garden. They went and hid. As God responds to the man and the woman following their act of disobedience, He promises that one day a descendent from Eve would COME to crush the head of the enemy who had deceived them. Throughout the writings of the Old Testament as God promises a Messiah, the theme of God coming into the world is repeated. We have referred to it before in these Advent studies, but again we emphasize the point that God has not given up, He has not abandoned the world, but He comes. When we celebrate Christmas, we are celebrating this act of God who comes to us, to bring redemption.

Who does the Light come to? John gives us two answers to that question. First of all he tells us that he comes to the world. **Vs. 10.** John says he comes to the world. He was in the world. In vs. 3, John informs us that the Word was responsible for the creation of the world. Now he tells us that the Word, the Light, was in the world. He has come into the world that He made, but the world did not recognize Him. When John speaks of the world, he is referring to the sphere, the organization or culture where people live. He was visibly present among the people that he created, but the world did not recognize Him. As we hear the stories of the birth of Jesus, and his life and ministry, we see that for the most part He is ignored by the people of the world.

Secondly John tells us that he came to His own. He is now referring to his own nation, his people, the Jews. Even his own people do not recognize him, they do not recognize the truth about who He is. Again, as we read the narratives about the birth of Jesus, we see how this plays out. There is NO ROOM for Him in the inn. When the magi came inquiring about the location of the birth of the King of the Jews, the Jewish leaders knew where the Messiah was to be born, but they did not follow the wise men, their curiosity was not aroused to the point where they would seek for him themselves. Their indifference was a manifestation of the indifference of the nation as a whole. For the most part, His own people do not recognize Him. How much do we see that take place in our day, as we observe the holiday of Christmas. People celebrate a holiday, but they do not recognize Jesus.

BUT, there were some who responded. John says there were some who did **Receive Him, who believed in His name.** There were some who were receptive, who did not reject Him, who welcomed Him. There were some who recognized Him as the Christ – they believed in His name. And the result for them was that they became children of God.

Now this experience of becoming children of God may be confusing for some. Some people are of the opinion that all people are “children of God.” If God is the Creator of all people, then He is the Father of all people. But the Bible teaches that because of sin people are alienated from God, out of relationship with Him. We are born into a condition of sinfulness, having fallen short of the glory of God. But now, God is making it possible for those who are “Not His children” to become His children. In John 3, Jesus is talking to a man named Nicodemus and tells him that if people want to be a part of God’s kingdom they must be “born again.” That’s

what Jesus is talking about here. By believing in Jesus we experience a New Birth, and become children of God. It is not a physical birth, from inside the mother's womb, But a Spiritual birth brought about by God.

So this paragraph answers the question, ***Why did Jesus come?*** We have learned who Jesus is as the WORD of God. We have learned that Jesus is the light, the TRUE Light who has come into the world to reveal God to us. And now we learn that Jesus has come to give people the opportunity to become a child of God. That's why we celebrate the birth of this man named Jesus.

As we conclude our time together today, I wonder if you have experienced this New Birth, if you have been born again. Have you had this experience of becoming a Child of God. You can do that today.

Acknowledge that you are alienated from God by your sinfulness

Believe that God sent Jesus into the world to be your Savior.

Confess your need for Him and invite Him to come and be your Savior and Lord.

Prayer.

Benediction