

VBC
Pastor Randy Archer
Isaiah 9:6-7
December 27-28, 2008

“Maybe We Should Do All of This Differently – Advent Conspiracy”

Welcome & Open

Good Christmas? Get what you wanted?

Best buy & game stop = real reminders of the Birth of Jesus, the Son of God

Pray

READ Isaiah 9:6-7

Advent Vigil

Advent: \ˈad-ˈvent\ noun (from Latin adventus, “arrival”)

1: The coming of Christ at the incarnation.

2: The period of 4 weeks before Christmas.

Vigil: \ˈvi-jəl\ noun (from Latin vigilia, “wakefulness”)

1: A period of sleeplessness.

2: An occasion for devotional watching or observance.

Advent Vigil a period of devoted watching for His incarnation, a time when we reflect on the names of the promised one:

Week 1 = Jesus promised as Wonderful Counselor

James 1:5 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”

Proverbs 2:6 – For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Week 2 = Jesus promised as Mighty God

Revelation 1:12-18 - I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Week 3 = Jesus Promised as Everlasting Father

Colossians 1:15-20 - He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Week 4 = Jesus promised as our Prince of Peace

Luke 2:14 - "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

The Advent Vigil we received this week had a quote that said, "When the heavenly host said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests" (Luke 2:14), we should have heard in this the news of hope. When peace was announced at Christmas, it was the coming of the transformation of the world from the way it's not supposed to be into "the way things ought to be." God was bringing Shalom to the world!

I hope that you experienced Jesus this Advent Season as He was promised to us in scripture.

And that brings us to this weekend.

READ Luke 2:1-20

+Watch AC Video

The Story of Christmas is very different from the story of Christmas (explain)

Story of Christmas:

God becomes flesh

Moves into our neighborhood

Shows up in a manger

To an unwed teenaged girl

Jesus gave Himself – relationally, time, space, presence

He is the Glory of Heaven revealed.

(remember what we just read – scripture/advent vigil)

vs

story of Christmas: (google search 'Christmas' = 870,000,000 hits in 0.07 seconds)

stressed out

depressing time of year

30-35 million real Christmas trees sold in America

debt

This isn't about a gimmick or program – rather it is about being Jesus in the world He has entrusted to our care. It's about living the Christmas Story – the real Christmas story.

As the video said – it begins with worship.

4 suggestions from Advent Conspiracy....

+Watch Liberia 1

We are to live incarnationally – be Jesus

Live among people

Eat and drink what they do

See the world with redemption

>**Worship Fully**: starts with Jesus and ends with Jesus

+Watch Liberia 2

What are we called to do?

Is my faith larger than just me? Just my family?

Whose Birthday is it? Want to give me gifts? = give to the least of these (Matt 25)

>**Spend Less**: maybe buy one less gift

+Watch Liberia 3

They drink, bathe and wash clothes all in the same water.

Most people here cannot even afford a daily meal

If you put a well here, it would be like heaven coming down to the community here.

People will not die from the water anymore

>**Give More**: God's gift to us was a relationship built on Love. Make Love visible through relational giving

+Watch Liberia 4

What would Jesus buy?

Some stats: 1 child dies every 15 seconds because they lack access to clean water. On Christmas Eve 40,000 men, women, and children will likely die from diseases they received from polluted drinking water. Another 40,000 will die on Christmas day and it continues every day of the year. You could change all this.....or you could just go shopping.

>**Love All**: Though rich, He became poor to love the forgotten, the poor, the overlooked and the sick – give resources to those who need help the most

>Can you imagine what it would be like if we really Worshipped fully, spent less, gave more and loved all?

What a great expression of what the Gospel should look like.

It makes us honest about what we care about.

And it gets us closer to God's heart for the world , as we celebrate an ordinary night as the most extraordinary event in human history – when on that night (2 Corinthians 5:19) “God was in Christ, reconciling the cosmos to Himself.”

READ Isaiah 9:6

Close in prayer