

December 5, 2021

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Second Sunday of Advent

Young people's message: The second theme for Advent this year is Watch. That is usually something you do while you are waiting. You watch for the thing you are waiting for so you don't miss it. Waiting and watching seem to go hand in hand.

I have noticed that we truly have become a watching culture. Most people spend many hours of the day watching the screen on their phones or Ipads. I find it absolutely amazing that such a small screen commands our attention to watch it. As Christians, watching has commanded our attention for more time than our technology ever has. We have been waiting and watching for Jesus's return for the past two thousand years. The only thing that has changed is how we watch.

Do you use your technology to watch for Jesus's return? Do you think that someone would record His return on their phone? What do you think it would look like? Would Jesus return as a child born in a hospital? Or born in a refugee camp? Or would He return as an adult from the clouds? However Jesus returns to earth will be very exciting. It will blow us all away in how it unfolds. As usual it will far exceed our wildest expectations. This is why Advent is so exciting, because we know He is coming, but we do not know how it will happen.

So we keep waiting and watching and encouraging one another. How we watch for His return seems to have changed slightly. The constant

thing is that we are still watching. There is the possibility that He may e-mail or text you that He has returned. So keep watching no matter how you do it.

Adult's message: God in Heaven, as we learn to watch for signs of Your presence, open our eyes, ears and minds so that we might see the way You are at work around us, within us and through us. Amen.

The second theme of Advent this year is to Watch. It is a simple word but it contains so many dimensions for Christians at this time of year. Watching like waiting is not a passive endeavour for a Christian. It also has a very active dimension that is different from waiting and building the kingdom here. When Our Lord was in the garden with His three core disciples, He gave us good advice. Mk 14:38, "Watch and pray." That while we are watching for the Lights return we should be praying. A very spiritual activity. Yet an active one that is done with the mind and heart.

We are praying so that we will be able to recognize the Messiah when He returns. With prayer comes discernment so that it will be easier to recognize the Messiah. Jesus warns us of this in Mt 24:5, "For many will come in My name saying, I am the Christ and will deceive many." This is why we should be praying and discerning while we watch for the return of the Light of the World.

Watching means looking for Jesus's return amongst us in the flesh. His physical return will be like a thief in the night. St. Peter tells us this in 2 Peter 3:10. Our Lord's return will be a time, place and condition that

nobody expects or properly prepares for. His return will be very unexpected.

While we are watching for Our Lord's physical return we should also be looking around ourselves. We should be looking for God's presence around us and in our lives. As I said last Sunday, we should look for those places where the Spirit of God is moving. God's Spirit has never really left us. This Spirit has remained present for the past two thousand years in the church. It has guided and leads us. God's Spirit can be seen and felt in acts of kindness, mercy and compassion. Most of the time they are very subtle and almost unnoticeable. We are the ones who need to have the eyes to see it and the ears to hear it.

Watching involves our eyes, ears minds and hearts. Watching is not a passive endeavour but requires our prayer and discernment. A very active spiritual practice. So that we are not deceived by false Christs. He already warned us about this. Watching requires all of our senses and much more. Watching means that we look for the physical return of Our Lord. Yet knowing that God's Spirit is still very present in our world. We need to watch and look for it in our world. Watching is a very complex and involved undertaking for most Christians. Yet as a good and faithful servant, that is what we do. God bless, Pastor D