

Isaiah 64:1-9

November 29, 2020

“Wait Till Your Father Comes Home!”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Advent Mid-week 1

Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from God our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[1] “Wait till your father comes home!”

How many of you remember hearing those words when you were growing up?

Perhaps you still hearing these words today: Wait till your father comes home!

[*Decorations*]

[2] I remember a story about a little boy and it was close to Christmas.

His parents were both out of the house.

Dad was at work; Mom was grocery shopping.

And they had left him there alone.

The family had not yet set up the Christmas tree,

and he wanted some Christmas decorations in the house.

And he had time on his hands.

He had paper, scissors, glue, and crayons;

no adult supervision and a very creative mind.

[3] He drew, colored, and cut out a large number of decorations:

Santa Claus, some presents, a fully decorated Christmas tree,

more presents, a baby Jesus, and more presents.

And then, after he had drawn, colored, and cut out all these decorations,

he did the only reasonable thing that an eight-year-old could think to do.

He glued them all to the living room wall.

His mother came home first.

I’m sure she said a number of things – including:

[4] Wait till your father comes home!

And the little boy didn’t think that meant

he was coming to congratulate him on his creativity.

This is the season of Advent, and like the little boy, we are waiting.

[5] At Advent, God is coming.

**[*Judgment*]**

Advent means “coming.” AND Advent has two focuses:  
the first coming of the baby Jesus at Christmas and  
the second coming of King Jesus at Judgment Day.

Very often we only think of Advent in connection with the joys of Christmas.  
We can’t wait for Christmas!  
We join Isaiah as he declares,  
“For unto a child is born, unto us a child is given” (Isaiah 9:6)

However, as we read Holy Scripture,  
we discover that both the Old and New Testaments connect Advent  
to Judgment Day.

In 1 Thessalonians, we read:  
“For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord  
will come like a thief in the night” (5:2).

Jesus himself said,  
“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. . . .  
When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,  
then he will sit on his glorious throne” (Mt 25:13, 31).

**[*We Have Sinned*]**

Advent means God is coming. A holy God is coming, and we are sinners.

Yes, in our text, Isaiah first sounded quite eager to have the Father come:  
“Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down” (v 1).

But then it’s almost as if he rethinks what he just prayed for.  
He says to this God,  
“Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;  
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?” (v 5).

It is like he is saying,  
“Oh, no. Now that I think about it, Father, maybe I’m not so eager for you to come down.”  
Isaiah realizes that God has reason to come to us in terrible judgment.

Isaiah knows he has to admit, “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment” (v 6).

[6] Are you looking forward to the second coming?  
JUST Wait till your Father comes home!

[*Gold in Flesh*]

But hold it. This is only half of the story.  
This is what we Lutherans call the Law.  
What about the Gospel? What about the Good News?

[7] We can say and believe: “Advent means God is coming, hurray!”

God is just and must deal with sin,  
but the Bible declares and declares loudly:  
God is also our loving Father.  
We can wait for his coming and wait with joy.

[8] Listen to what Isaiah tells us: “But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. . . . Remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people” (vv 8–9).

Sorry for our sin, we humbly go to our Father for forgiveness.  
What is the assurance of our forgiveness?  
It is simply this: Advent announces the coming of our loving God in the flesh.

[9] In John 1:14 we read, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”  
*The Word* is a title for Jesus.

This single verse is John’s commentary on the miracle of Christmas.

The eternal Word of God

became flesh, became a human being, was born among us.

[10] At Advent, God is coming.

[**LOOK**]

This loving God-in-the-flesh comes to us at Bethlehem’s manger.

[11] Look inside that manger. Look inside that feed trough.

What do you see?

You see not just a cute baby boy.

You see God in the flesh come for you!

[12] Look upon Calvary's cross.

What do you see?

You see not just a victim of an unjust punishment.

You see God in the flesh paying for your sins and for the sins of the world!

[13] Look inside that empty tomb on Easter Sunday morning.

What do you see?

He is not there! He has risen from the dead. He is God in the flesh,  
victorious over sin, victorious over death, victorious over the devil.

And he did this for you!

[14] When the end of the world and Judgment Day arrives, look!

Who is coming again? Look!

Who is coming in glory to take you to heaven  
and all who trust in him? Who is it?

It is God in the flesh, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Oh, glorious, just wait till your Father comes home!

[15] At Advent, God is coming.

[*Another Story*] [16] Here's another story about that little boy.

He grew up in a poor family.

They had to give up the farm and move into town.

Dad had a job as a hospital janitor.

After a while he desperately needed new work shoes.

The ones he was wearing had holes in the soles,  
and daylight could be seen through the holes.

He had been saving money to get new work shoes.

At just the same time, the boy very much wanted a new baseball glove,  
which they definitely couldn't afford.

[17] But his father spent that money for a new baseball glove for the boy  
and put cardboard in his shoes to cover the holes!

Oh, he loved that glove.

Dad taught him to take care of it and never to leave it outside in the rain.  
But one day he did just that.

[18] The leather glove was soaked through with the rain.

The boy found it and was heartbroken.

His mother then said those famous words again,  
“Wait till your father comes home.”

The boy was not looking forward to his dad’s arrival.

Dad came home.

And the boy showed him the ball glove. And then waited for the worst...  
What happened next completely came by surprised.

Dad did not get angry.

His eyes were wet with tears. He knew the boy was sorry.  
He knew the boy loved that ball glove.  
He knew the boy deserved punishment.

Instead,

he showed the boy how to dry out the glove by putting it in the oven at a low heat.  
He showed the boy how to rub some “mink oil” into the leather to preserve it.  
After a couple of days of this, the glove was as good as new.

The boy waited until the dad came home,  
and he came with mercy and forgiveness and love.

[*Conclusion*] [19] At Advent, God is coming.

He is coming as the babe in the manger and as the king at Judgment Day.  
He is holy and just and takes seriously our sin.  
But he is especially merciful and forgiving and loving.

So it’s only fitting that at the beginning of Advent  
that we pray the last prayer recorded in Holy Scripture and pray it eagerly:  
“Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22:20). AMEN!

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So we... Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous deeds among the people. AMEN! (Psalm 96:3)

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