



Advent - Part I

(from 11/27/16 sermon - Spencer Teal)

I. **OPEN** - See if there is anyone who wants to share a short testimony, or if there are there specific praise updates to begin CG.

PRAY

Q - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance?

***READ ALOUD Revelation 22:17-21**

II. REFLECT

The word Advent speaks of an arrival, occurrence, or coming. It's actually derived from the Latin word *Adventus*, which means "coming." The early church, 4th or 5th century, would set aside a short period of time as a time of preparation, which might include penance, prayer, and fasting. Interestingly, when advent was first observed the occurrence, arrival or coming that they had in mind was actually Christ's return...His second coming. So, they were looking forward to the 2nd coming, and not necessarily backward at His first coming (i.e. Christmas). By the 6th century, however, this had changed and advent's focus was tied more specifically to Christmas and the advent of the Christ child.

Discussion - On Sunday, Spencer reminded us that the observance of advent is primarily about being intentional in our focus on Christ at Christmas. It's a time for reflection...a time for gaining perspective. It's not something else just to add to a busy season. Rather, it's a time to remember that Christ HAS come and IS coming again. It's why we have hope...our reason for living...the reason we can endure...etc.

Q - Because Jesus really did come _____.

Q - Because I know Jesus really is coming again _____.

Take time to discuss each of those questions with your community groups.

- In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel postured themselves for what? The coming of their Messiah & King.
- After Christ was born, and later at the revelation of Christ being the Messiah & Savior (Jesus literally means The Lord is salvation), we posture ourselves for what? The coming of the Messiah and King into our lives.
- Within the new testament church, we posture ourselves for what? The return of the Messiah & King.

Waiting has always been a part of the make-up of God's people. Q - Why is waiting so hard for us? Especially as Americans we are all about doing, producing, checking things off of our lists, etc. Advent prompts us to stop in our tracks and wait on Him...on purpose...with intentionality. Q - What are real and tangible ways that we can wait on Him well these next four weeks?

The passage in Revelation 22 reminds us that Advent truly is a 2-way street: 1) Jesus declares “I am coming” and 2) the Church responds by saying, “Amen, Come Lord Jesus!”

Silently Read pray through I John 2:28. Now do so again...and again. Meditate on the specific words in this passage and its implications. Make notes. Afterward, take time to discuss the thoughts and observations in your community group.

III. FURTHER APPLICATION - Take time to sing the following Christmas songs together, paying close attention to the advent words and themes.

Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n, and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

O Come All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye,
O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
Born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.
Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens
Of heaven above;
Glory to God,
Glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.

IV. CLOSE

Final thoughts?

V. BE ON-MISSION -

We encourage everyone to participate in advent this year utilizing the advent packet provided on Sunday.