

Sermon - 30 November 2025

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Date: 30 November 2025

Preacher: Ife Ojetayo

[0:00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Please be seated.

! A quick word before I actually start my sermon this morning. I know that you've noticed the scripture reading this morning is the triumphal entry.

And that seems strange. We begin in Advent. This isn't Palm Sunday. But this is actually the historical reading for the church. This has been the reading the church has always read in Advent, the first Sunday of Advent, since the 5th century.

This isn't actually even just the strictly Anglican thing. It's been the church, it's the church sort of one year lectionary since the 5th century. And it's rightly, I think, properly appointed for this Sunday.

Because who is entering? The King has come.

And he has come, and he has come, and we're meant to actually reflect. Don't look outside under blowing snow. We're well in here, and warm and safe from the wind.

[1:12] But it's meant to actually remind us that we are to prepare for the coming of the King. And notice, this is one of the wonderful things that Archbishop Cramer did.

He extended that gospel reading from verse 11, which is a typical reading, all the way to verse 13. So that we can see the Lord come to his own temple, and what he did there.

And so keep in mind, as we go through this text this morning, I just want to, in case some of you are wondering why we read that, I just wanted to make that a preamble before we enter into our reading, into our lessons and preaching this morning.

So today we're going to be in the gospel reading, Matthew 21, verse 1 to 13. And then in Romans chapter 13, verse 8 to 14. But I open your Bible to Matthew 21 first, and I do encourage you to open your Bible and follow along.

The theme, it's not very typical that I do this, but I have a theme for this particular week. It's the awakening and cleansing of the soul. And I keep that in mind as we go through our observations this morning.

[2:25] We stand today, again, at the doorway of a new Christian year. Advent begins, not with celebration, as often the new year begins with jubilation.

But the Christian new year begins, not with celebration, but with summons. With a sense of soberness. Advent is not only a prelude to Christmas.

It is that, but it's not just that. It is also the trumpet blast that shakes our soul awake. It announces, the Lord is at hand.

And in the gospel, Christ comes in the flesh. He comes, particularly in this gospel reading that we have before us this morning. He comes humble, riding upon a donkey, yet claiming David's throne. He enters his temple with authority, judging and cleansing it. In the epistle, Christ comes into the mind and into the hearts of the believers.

[3:44] Awakening us from sleep. Casting up the works of darkness. And clothing us with his own light. Thus, brothers and sisters, Advent confronts us with the double coming of the Lord.

He's coming in the flesh at Bethlehem to redeem. Which is what we're looking forward to in these four weeks of Advent. Before we enter into Christmas tide. But also, we're meant to look to his coming in glory.

At that last day. To judge. Which also, brothers and sisters, we await that day. And as our readings remind us this morning, it's coming now into our soul.

To awaken and to cleanse and to rule our hearts. Today then, let us walk with Christ into Jerusalem as it were. Into the temple even.

And finally, into our own hearts. Let us hear St. Paul's words from Romans. And know the time. And know that the hour has come for us to wake from sleep.

[4:46] From slumber. For salvation is near to us now than we first believed. We have in our gospel reading.

It begins with this account of the preparation by the disciples. According to Jesus' instructions. The gospel begins with these two disciples who were sent ahead.

To fetch a donkey and a colt. Their task is simple. It seems at least. Almost trivial. Yet Christ says this task is necessary.

Because the answer to give to the owner of this donkey and this colt is that the Lord needs them.

There's a necessity to this task. And in this we see the dignity of just ordinary obedience.

God prepares his great works through quiet faithfulness. He calls these two disciples to go and get this donkey. The master of the donkey and the colt are to obey the Lord's word in releasing them.

[5:50] And Christ ministers, which we all are brothers and sisters. We're all Christ ministers. We are like these first disciples who are told of us in this gospel. We are to prepare his way.

And often as we do so, we have little understanding of all that lies before us. All that Christ intends.

But we are called nevertheless to labor in Christ's kingdom.

And anticipate Christ's coming. You may not know how God will use your small acts of faithful obedience to prepare a soul. To prepare a family.

Or congregation. For the great day of the Lord. It is not for you to know. It is just for you to obey.

Every heart. Every home.

Every church needs to be prepared. And Christ still says, the Lord has need. Not because he lacks power. But because he chooses to work through our own small obedience.

[6:51] To bring about his will. So let us therefore not reject or resent these small obedience that God calls us to.

The disciples' simple task carried eternal significance. So do yours. Your simple obedience. Your prayers. Your worship.

Your labors of love. For Christ's sake. Carries eternal significance. You may not know all of it now. On this side of eternity. But you will be amazed.

Through such things. The king draws near. Through our very small acts of obedience. The king draws near. Dispelling the works of darkness.

First in our own hearts. As we obey him. He dispels the work of darkness in our own hearts. But then even in the hearts of those around us. The king draws near. Dispelling the works of darkness.

[7:52] And then we are told. As Christ enters. The crowd. Verse 9. The crowds that went before him. And that followed him. Were shouting. Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. The crowds gathered. They threw their garments down. Before him. And a sign.

Of identifying him as king and ruler. They wave branches. In joy. They cry out. The ancient word. Hosanna.

But what does that word really mean? The word is transliterated. What that just means is that it's a Greek word. Actually it's a Hebrew word. But it was first transliterated into the Greek New Testament.

So as you read it now. If you were reading the Greek New Testament. You read the word Hosanna. It's not a Greek word. It's a Hebrew word. And that's been transliterated to your English Bible. So whenever you see the word Hosanna.

[8:54] Know that it's an original Hebrew word. Written in English. That Hebrew word phrase is actually an Hebrew phrase. Meaning Oshiana. It's found in Psalm 118.

And it means this. It means save. Please. Please. It's imploring God to come and save and deliver. It's a cry for help. Save. Please. It's a desperate plea for rescue. Help. Save me. Imagine someone drowning.

And yelling Hosanna. That's actually what you meant to. That's the picture you meant to see. This isn't original to me. But it's very helpful. That analogy. But the psalmist.

In Psalm 118. Verse 25. In verse 26. Follows up that cry for help. With this phrase. He follows up the cry for salvation.

[9:52] With these words. Blessed is he. Who comes in the name of the Lord. The cry for rescue. And the arrival of the rescuer. Were joined in one breath.

And across the centuries. The meaning shifted. Instead of just a cry for help. Hosanna changed from save please.

To salvation is here. Salvation has come. It became a cry of hope. And assurance. In God's salvation.

Like someone who cries for help. Again. Imagine someone drowning. Right? But then he sees the rescuer. A life God. A life thing thrown at him.

As he's drowning. Or a life God coming to save him. And then he shouts. Here he comes. I'm saved. That's the word Hosanna. Over the years.

[10:49] Over the centuries. Hosanna then. Became a cry of assurance. Of the Lord coming to save. Hosanna in the highest.

This is what they're saying. Hosanna. Salvation. It's here. Hosanna to the son of David. The long promised king.

Has come. Bringing salvation. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Let everyone's angels. Join our song of salvation. Because the king is here.

He's come to save us. The crowd is doing two things at once. They're crying for rescue. But they're also celebrating the arrival of the rescuer.

And most of them did not understand everything about Jesus. But their hearts saw something true. They knew hope was coming. They knew hope had come in the person of Jesus Christ.

[11:57] They knew salvation was arriving. They knew that the king had come into his city. And what did Christ do? He received their praise.

Not because they understood everything. In fact we know this same crowd. Less than a week later will be yelling crucify him. But nevertheless Christ received their praise.

Not because they understood everything. But because they desired the right person. Do you desire the right person? As you begin this new church here.

Do you desire the right person? The same is true today. It's not perfect understanding that is required of you. It's a simple faith that is required.

A simple faith in the one who has come to rescue. All you need to do today. Even now is to cry. Lord save me.

[13:00] Help. Can you shout salvation is here. Christ has come. If you can. If you can see him as your rescuer.

Then you are prepared for his coming. A sincere. Hosanna. Is all he has. Of us. That is what it means to prepare ourselves for advent.

A heart crying. Hosanna. Is a heart. That is ready for the coming of the Lord. And so Jesus enters his city. The king has come. And when he entered Jerusalem.

The whole city. We're told. Was stirred up. In verse 10. And they were saying. Who is this? And the crowd said. This is the prophet of Jesus.

This is the prophet Jesus. From Nazareth of Galilee. Now. Matthew says to us. That the whole city. Was stirred. By the way. Jerusalem at this point. It's at full capacity.

[14:00] Because. What is happening? What is the time of the year? Passover. So. Historically. We're told that Jerusalem. It always. It tripled in size.

Around the time of Passover. Because people are coming. From all. Over. The. Diaspora. Coming. To observe Passover. In the holy city. So this is a.

A city. Full to capacity. Crying. Hosanna. And they say. Who is this? Some of them say. What a contrast. That question is.

Who's this guy? Where's he from? What's he doing? Riding a donkey? Why are you hailing him as king? Some of them are asking. Maybe some of them joined. Because the crowd is doing it.

So let's go with the crowd. But then they will say. Who actually is he? What a contrast. His second coming will be. Than his first coming. At his first coming.

[14:56] The city asked. Who is this? But at his second coming. No one will ask. Every eye will see him. Every knee will bow.

Every tongue will confess. At his first coming. He rode a borrowed donkey. At his second coming. He will ride upon the clouds. At his first coming.

Only a few. And you may say. The whole city is crying. But it's still. Compared to. The second coming. It's only a few. Who are crying. Hosanna. At his second coming. All creation. Will shake a weight.

At his first coming. He stood wrongly condemned. For your sin. And my sin. At his second coming. He is revealed. As the judge.

Of all the earth. But today. This day. This advent day. He still comes. He comes in meekness.

[15 : 54] And he comes in mercy. Not yet to judge. But to save. Do you see him. As your rescuer. Will you cry out to him.

The city received him. As king. And then Christ. Enters the temple. Verse 12. Jesus entered the temple. And drove out.

All who sold. And bought. In the temple. And he overturned. The tables. Of the money changers. And the seats. Of those who sold. Pigeons. This is happening. In the temple. And Jesus comes in. And he overturned. All of these. And he said to them. Verse 13. He said to them. It is written. My house. Shall be called. The house of prayer. But you. Make it.

A den of robbers. All right. Alarmly. Christ comes. To his temple. God.

[16 : 52] Comes. To his temple. The king. Comes. Comes. Into a city. And he comes. To his abode. Alarmingly. He finds there.

There is no readiness. No welcome. No cry. Of hosanna. Instead. He finds a house. Given over to commerce.

And greed. And distractions. The very place. Meant. To be the meeting. Ground. Of God. And man. Has become.

A place. Of noise. Empty noise. Has become. A place. Of profit. Has become. A place. Of spiritual. Negligence. And so.

What does the Lord do? He cleanses. Cleanses it. He does it. Forcefully. He does it. Violently. And here is a warning.

[17 : 47] Suited to Advent. Solemnity. Is a warning. For all of us. It is possible. To join the crowd. In praising Jesus. Yet keep.

The inner temple. Of the heart. Unprepared. Cluttered. And resistant. To his rule. It is very easy. To be among the crowd. Yelling. Hosanna. Outwardly. But inwardly. You are not ready. You are not surrendered.

To his rule. And reign. And perhaps. This Advent. You find. You are so crowded. With anxieties. Ambitions. And entertainment. And resentments.

This is one of the. Unhelpful. Ironies. Of this time. Of the year. As we enter. Into Advent. Our secular culture. Is ramping up. There is a lot of.

[18 : 43] Busyness. Going on. There is a lot of. Things that are. Pulling at your attention. And Christ. Your King. And Lord. Tells you. Prepare the way. Prepare your hearts.

Prepare your mind. Your body. Your soul. Whom. To whom. Will you turn? Who will you listen to? The world. Or your King. Will you listen to? The anxieties. That come with this time of year. The ambitions. The very entertainments.

That want to distract you. The resentment. That build up. Often. At this time of year. Sins. You do not really want. Christ to disturb. Are you.

Arboring those sins. In your heart. And says. Christ. Stay away. These are the idols. Of my heart. Perhaps. It's money. And pleasure.

[19 : 39] And pride. Perhaps these things. Have sneaked into the temple. Of your heart. Unnoticed. Know this. Brothers and sisters. Christ loves you. Too much.

To let your soul. Remain. A marketplace. For the hopeless. Things of this world. He loves you. Too much. To let you. Seek after. Unsatisfying. Things of this world.

He comes. To cleanse you. For you. Are his temple. He comes. To save you. To sanctify you. His church. Pray.

Therefore. That Christ. Will cleanse. Whatever. He finds in you. That does not belong. Pray. That he will overthrow. Whatever competes. With his presence. And cleanse your heart.

Making it. A home of grace. Pray. And as we think about that. Ourselves. As the temple of God. We turn our focus.

[20 : 37] To the epistle reading. And what St. Paul tells us. In this Roman. Reading. That we have this morning. If the gospel shows us. Christ coming into his temple.

To cleanse it. The epistle shows us. Christ cleansing our temples. Which is. Our hearts. And minds. And lives. St. Paul teaches us. How to prepare. For Christ's advent.

This is what Paul has to say to us. Paul begins with a command. Hold no man anything. But to love one another. What do we do in this world?

We accumulate many debts. In life. We accumulate debts. Of kindness. Hold. Apologies. Withheld. Relationships. And failures.

Failures. To one another. Relationships. That are strained. Because of our neglect. Our selfishness. We hold all of these debts.

[21 : 34] But above all of these. Stands the great perpetual debt. That we're called to hold. Really. Actually the only debt we're called to hold. In the Bible. The debt of love. Love.

Is the fulfilling of the law. We're told. Because it is the very nature of God. And if we're. God's children. We bear that nature. Where love grows.

Where love grows. Cold. Rather. Christ's coming. Is unwelcome. For where love abounds. Christ is always present.

So here's. Here's my. Plea with you. Brothers. This is this year. As. The church of God gathered. Let us allow God's love.

To abound. Among us. Because where God's love abounds. Christ. Is always present. Advent calls us.

[22 : 36] To leave no relational debt. Outstanding. Advent calls us. As we prepare for the coming of our King. To forgive.

To reconcile. To seek peace. To love. As Christ loved us. This is not sentimental.

In fact. It's spiritual warfare. Love. Is the armor. That extinguishes. The fiery darts of Satan. If you would prepare for the coming of Christ.

Begin. By loving your neighbor. Carry one another's burden. And in doing so. Fulfill the law of Christ. St. Paul then says to us.

Know the time. That the hour has come. For you to wake from sleep. Well to know the time. Is to perceive. The urgency.

[23 : 37] Life is short. Another year has begun. Opportunity passes. Eternity approaches. Christ is nearer today than yesterday.

So Advent is a time to shake the soul awake. To remember. You do not have forever to repent. You do not have forever to forgive.

You do not have forever to believe. Now is the hour of decision. The Lord is nearer to you. Nearer in judgment.

Nearer in salvation. Than ever before. So knowing the time. Means refusing spiritual complacency. It means hearing the alarm bells.

Of scripture. And rising to meet the dawn. Now is the hour of decision. St. Paul continues in verse 12 of Romans 13.

[24 : 40] The night is far gone. The day is at hand. So that let us cast off the works of darkness. And put on the armor of light. See there.

Light is an armor. Let us walk. Properly. As in the daytime. Not in orgies. And drunkenness. Not in sexual immorality.

And sensuality. Not in quarreling. And jealousy. But what is Paul showing us here? Night is the age of sin. Night is ignorance.

Night is death. Day. Daylight. Daylight. Is the age of Christ's reign. In glory. As it reigns in your heart.

As a believer. Advent reminds us of this. That this redemptive story. That we're in. Moves. Towards a determined end.

[25 : 38] The daybreak of the Lord's return. Is at hand. Therefore.

What are we to do? Cast off the works of darkness. Put on. The armor of light. Darkness is cast off. Like a garment. See what Paul says there? You do not drift out of sin. You do not drift out of sin.

You cast it away. It is a willful.

Active thing. That must be done. Light. In the same token. Is not something that just happened arbitrarily. We put it on. Put light on.

As an armor. Cast off the works of darkness. Put on. The armor of light. Holiness. Is not only purity.

[26 : 33] Holiness. Is protection. And so. Those who clothe themselves. With Christ's righteousness. Need not fear. The powers of night. If you clothe yourself.

With the righteousness of Christ. You need not fear the dark. Advent is a time then. To take stock. Of your soul. What works of darkness. Cling to you.

That it must be cast off. What secret sins. Sins. What habits of bitterness. Have taken root in your hearts. What apathy.

Towards God. Have you indulged in. What self-indulgence. Cast it all off. Cast them off.

The day is at hand. And then. What are we to do in turn. Finally. Paul brings us to the heart. Of this Christian preparation. That we are meant to do. In verse 14.

[27 : 30] It says. Put on. This is what light is. This is what it means to put on. Put on the Lord Jesus. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. And make no provision.

For the flesh. To gratify. Its desires. That's what we are meant to do. That's how we prepare. Put on Christ. His merits.

Our hope. His righteousness. Is our clothing. His life. Is our example. His spirit. Is our strength. His likeness.

Is our destiny. So put on Christ. And this means. To let his character. Shape your thoughts. And your desires. And your actions.

It means. Say no. To the flesh. Not out of willpower alone. Because your willpower. Will get you nowhere. But you do it. Out of love.

[28 : 28] For Christ. Out of gratitude. For the righteousness. That he's clothed you in. You do it. When you're clothed in Christ. Satan. Cannot accuse you.

Do you know that? Satan comes. He wants to accuse you. He wants to tell lies. About you. For you're clothed. In Christ's righteousness. You can always point to that.

Brothers and sisters. It is not my righteousness. It is not my perfection. It is that of my Lord. And Savior. Jesus Christ. I stand. On his merits.

And not my own. And to that. Satan has no accusation. So when you're clothed in Christ. Satan cannot accuse you.

Because Christ's light. Blinds him. This is the aim of Advent. It's not mere ritual preparation. It is union with Christ himself.

[29 : 24] That we're called to. Be united to your Savior. Your Rescuer. Hosanna. And so I think it's fitting therefore.

That the feast of St. Andrew. Stands at the threshold of Advent. Andrew. The first called disciple. Is a model of faithful readiness.

The gospel tells us that. When he heard John the Baptist announce Christ. He followed Jesus at once. Having found the Messiah. He immediately brought his brother.

Simon Peter to the Lord. Andrew teaches us. Advent's readiness. In two ways. First. Andrew responded promptly. To Christ's call.

He responded promptly. To Christ's call. There was no delay. No procrastination. No half-heartedness. At Christ's word.

[30 : 21] He left nets. A boat. And occupation. To follow him. Advent calls us. To the same readiness. To rise from spiritual slumber.

To leave behind lesser things. And to follow the king. Who draws near. And second. Andrew brought others. To Christ. He did not keep the good news to himself.

And one of the first missionary acts. In the New Testament. Is Andrew. Going to call his brother Peter. He says to his brother Peter. We have found.

The Messiah. Who are you going to call? To call. This year. And say. We have found the Messiah. Andrew embodies.

The church's calling. During Advent. To invite others. Into the hope of Christ's coming. To prepare hearts. Not only our own. But also among those we love.

[31 : 20] In this way. Andrew stands. As the first herald. Of Advent. Hurting us. To come to Christ. Swiftly. And to bring others. With us.

Into the light of his kingdom. In the light of his kingdom. Beloved in Christ. On this first Sunday of Advent. We have observed. The gospel.

Shows. Christ. Cleansing the temple. The epistles. Shows. Christ. Cleansing our soul. Saint Andrew. Saint Andrew. Teaches us. To respond to Christ's call.

With readiness and joy. And the collect. Teaches us. To pray. To God. For that cleansing. Because only he can do that work in us. And Advent presses then.

The question. To all of us. Is your heart. Is your heart prepared. To receive the king. Is your heart. Prepared.

[32 : 17] To receive the king. If Christ came today. In power and great glory. What would he find. In the temple of your soul. Would he find you crying.

Hosanna. From a heart. That has faithfully rested. In his salvation. Or would he need to overturn tables. Of sin in your hearts. Whichever it is.

He comes still. Let him do what needs done. In your heart. Because he loves you. He comes to you this morning.

In his word to you. Give him room. In the quiet approach. Of his Holy Spirit. Give him room. To do the work he needs to do.

And one day. He will come in reading majesty. All eyes will see him. And so let us therefore pray. Even so.

[33 : 17] Come. Lord Jesus. Almighty God. Give us grace. To cast away the works of darkness. And to put on the armor of light.

Now in this mortal life. When your son Jesus Christ. Came to visit us. In great humility. So that on the last day. When he comes again. In his glorious majesty. To judge the living and the dead.

We may rise to everlasting life. Through him who lives and reigns with you. And the Holy Spirit.

Now and forever. Amen. We will come.

Come to God as his church. His temple. We will come. As we get. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come.

We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come. We will come.

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