

Avent Carol Service 1994 1

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] And he says, the Lord is coming to dwell among us. This is many centuries before Christ was born. Zechariah had that confidence and that faith that he was one who would come to the nations and one to whom ultimately the nations would come.

That was Zechariah's picture which has been portrayed this afternoon. Then we go back to Isaiah and back to the desert.

And he tells a wonderful thing happening. You know, the total aridness of the desert with the sun beating down on it hard all day.

And he says, the desert is going to bloom. And it's going to be filled with fragrance and with flowers and with floods of water. But then he says that this is a sign of a great change.

And he says in that change, listen to this. The feeble hand will be strengthened. Knees that give way will be straightened.

[1 : 17] Fearful hearts will find face. Blind eyes will find sight. Deaf ears will be unstopped.

The lame will leap like deer. Tongues that are dumb will shout with joy.

And in the midst of the burning sand of the desert will be found a pool of water. What a wonderful picture that so far transcends anything in human ambition, anything of technical accomplishment.

It's not just that we will provide technologies for people who are impaired. It's that the dumb will shout and the deaf will hear and the blind will speak and the lame will leap.

Because something very wonderful awaits us. And that awaiting will be fulfilled when he comes.

And then you turn to Luke.

[2 : 33] And there the God for whom nothing is impossible. You read the story of a woman long past the age of childbearing giving birth to a child.

And a young woman before the time of childbearing gives birth to a child. And death.

Suddenly we see a dramatic picture of our sexuality serving a purpose way beyond ourselves. And that woman has been the one who has given expression to the deepest joy and worship.

And then we turn to Mark. And there you see in historical reality what Isaiah prophesied. A great black bearded man clothed in camel's hair and eating locusts and wild honey coming and shouting to all the people that the kingdom has come.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. The highway shall be open. And he will come to us and we will go to him.

[3 : 56] And next we will go to Revelation. And in Revelation you will see a magnificent picture of the absolute tyranny of the Lord of the church in a figure like the Son of Man with all the power and all authority given to him.

And the church is like one of those guttering candles there that are picking up every draft that blows. and he is the one behind the churches.

He is the Lord of the church. And you may look at one of those candles and see how little light it gives as the darkness encroaches.

And so the church seems to give little light until it points to one like unto the Son of Man in all his power and all his glory and all his authority.

And that's what Revelation tells us about. And then from Thessalonians you're told how to wait the coming of the Lord and how to face the fact of our weakness and our mortality and our death and how to anticipate that he comes to overcome death and we are one day to be with him.

[5 : 30] He comes to us in order that we may come to him. Now consider this, you see. And consider that in the wonderful and amazing grace of God we have come here to hear these scriptures.

And we're not any different from the people who perhaps with the great and same spiritual longing have thought that some fulfillment might be found in all the hijinks and all the excitement of the great of gain.

They, like us, need to fend off the brute facts of existence to temporarily arrest the sadness of life to briefly shroud the inevitability of death to provide the happy illusion of meaning through long enchanted afternoons to be spellbound until finally it's over and there's rain in the west and there's peanut shells caught in the soles of your shoes and there's nothing.

Well, the purpose of this service is to tell you that there has been promised that one would come among us.

That that promise has been fulfilled and he is coming. And his coming is announced from the desert.

[7 : 14] And his coming brings great good news healing. And he, by being born into the world, has come among us.

And one day he will come with great glory. And when he comes, we're told, every eye will see, every deaf ear will hear, every dumb voice will shout, legs will dance, and fearful hearts will burst with joy and feeble hands will be lifted up in praise.

And he will come and every eye shall see him. There's only one thing with which I want to conclude. even as we have the promise of his coming, so we too, each of us as individuals, have the invitation to come ourselves.

He comes to us and says, will you come to me? He comes to the door of our hearts.

[8 : 37] and will we meet him at that door? We often on Advent Sunday are so preoccupied with rehearsing his promised coming to us, we may forget his invitation that he makes for us to come to him when he says, as he might well say to you, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. Why? Because I alone can teach you about the brute fact of existence, overcome the sadness of life, burst the bonds of inevitable death, give to you solid gold for meaning in your life, and at the end of the day, fill you with a sense of joy and hope and fulfillment.

I beg you in Christ's name that from your heart, as we celebrate his coming, we may respond to his invitation and come to him, perhaps for the first time as a stranger, perhaps as one who comes back, burdened and heavy laden, but will you come?

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Game CHOIR SINGS

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