

The First Sunday in Advent

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] Advent is often the forgotten season of the church year as people begin amping up for Christmas.

! Advent is a short penitential season with its main focus on preparing us to meet our Lord when He shall come again to judge both the living and the dead.

Advent, then, is a call for all of us to be preparing, to prepare to meet our Creator, our Lord, and our King, Jesus the Christ.

So the obvious question is, how do we prepare for our Lord's second coming? How do we prepare for Advent? Well, the succinct answer comes from our collect this morning, as we prayed that we might cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

These words of our collect reflect the teaching from our epistle text this morning here in Romans chapter 13. In Romans chapter 13, we are given a very practical, a very specific way of casting off the darkness and then putting on the armor of light.

[1 : 21] St. Paul instructs us that we should owe no one anything except love, which we owe to everyone, because all people are made in the image of God.

So we are to love all people. St. Paul then says that love is the fulfillment of the law. St. Paul provides us with a review of the commandments, as he says here in verse 9 of Romans chapter 13, You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet.

But then he says, if there's any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. He then repeats this in verse 10, where he says, love is the fulfillment of the law.

According to the teaching of St. Paul, which simply reiterates what our Lord said, is that loving God is loving neighbor.

And loving neighbor is true love for God. Love is not mere words we speak. It is a life that we are to live.

[2 : 41] It is a life of self-sacrifice, in obedience to our God, and for the good of others. It's a life of surrendering our will to God by swallowing our pride so that we can serve others.

That's why St. Paul becomes even more transparent and even more blunt as he concludes this teaching here in Romans chapter 13 in verse 13 by saying, St. Paul says, St. Paul says, We are called to love sacrificially, unselfishly. Furthermore, we are not to be difficult people by being combative, contentious, or argumentative.

We are not to live in constant strife or envy of others, wishing we had someone else's life, which is the fantasy and destructive lie preached on social media today.

No, we are to put on the Lord Jesus. And this language of putting on the Lord Jesus is the language of baptism. In other words, we are to remember who we are and who we belong to.

[4 : 49] You see, we belong to Christ. He claimed us. He claimed us. He rescued us as his very own in the waters of holy baptism.

And now we are to put on Christ, clothed in his righteousness. Therefore, we are to continually to say no to a life of sin, because we are children of the Father through the work of the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Instead of living for self and selfishly, we are to seek to practice the life and the virtues of the one who washed us, the one who cleansed us, and the one who clothed us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

There are many wonderful things that take place in the life of St. Philip's throughout Advent. We have life together on Wednesdays where we come together, we eat, we fellowship, and we pray together.

We have ornament decorating, wreath making that happened yesterday. We collect money or items for children's Christmas gifts.

[6 : 08] We decorate, we plan, we get ready for Christmas, and all of that is very good. But let's not forget what Advent is really about.

It's a call for all of us to be preparing, to be repenting, to prepare to meet our God at the end of our lives here on earth, which is quickly approaching.

Life is short. Therefore, we should spend our days seeking and serving God, not just merely pandering to ourselves.

Advent is a call to action. It's a call to love God and to love our neighbor, which is an exercise of our will, conforming ourselves to God as his obedient children.

Therefore, dear people of God, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light by living as faithful and obedient, baptized children of God as we prepare to meet our creator, judge, and king, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[7 : 26] Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.