

Advent IV

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Date: 21 December 2025

Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] Dearly beloved, as many of you know, Father Miller Miller is here. We remember him in our prayers.

! He texted me yesterday. He had a sermon all made up. So please, this is Father Miller's words. And no, they're good words.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. In our Old Testament reading of Isaiah chapter 11, we heard those encouraging words of hope as the Lord spoke to Israel by saying, Comfort, yes, comfort my people, says your God.

Speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity is pardoned. What our Lord is describing is that the hard and difficult captivity that Israel had endured from the oppression of the Assyrians was now finally coming to an end.

Israel was about to experience what their ancestors experienced as they had come out of the land of Egypt as free people by the deliverance of their God.

[1 : 22] But Isaiah chapter 11 is not simply about the immediate rescue of Israel from the hands of the Assyrians. It speaks of something far, far greater.

We heard about a voice crying out in the wilderness that says, Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low. The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth.

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

And we know that this voice was speaking to the ministry of John the Baptist. And the real deliverance is not from an earthly tyrant, nation, or some vast army.

[2 : 23] Our deliverance is from something much more terrifying. Our deliverance is from the permanent exile from God.

It is from eternal separation from our creator. It is from death and hell. What the Lord is saying here in Isaiah chapter 11 is that the exile and slavery will be abolished forever.

God himself is coming to rescue and deliver his people. That's why we read in Isaiah chapter 11 verses 10 through 11.

Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand and his arms shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him and his work before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and gently lead those who are with young.

[3 : 30] The ministry of St. John the Baptist was to herald and proclaim the coming of our great God and warrior king, Jesus. And yet God would come in the most humble of circumstances.

He would come as a lowly baby. He would come to be the Lamb of God who would offer himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. Yes, God would take death upon himself and defeat it by destroying its power and transforming death into life by way of his resurrection.

And in our Lord's atoning sacrifice and by his glorious resurrection, he brings our own exile to an end.

And this Lamb of God is now our shepherd who feeds, gathers, and leads us home. And we witnessed this new life and hope this morning.

Little Ava Marie has not only been adopted into a loving home by caring parents, Stu and Jasmine, and we rejoice for God answering our prayers, but she has also been adopted into the family of God this morning and made an heir of his kingdom.

[4 : 52] Ava has been incorporated into Christ and is now a child of God and a member of his body that shares in his life over death. Ava, like all of us, has not been forgotten.

Her exile has ended. Her new life has begun. And our Lord feeds, gathers, and promises to lead her home. But her life, and ours, is now to be lived in complete service to our King.

Hope is the new day for all of us. Life has replaced death, and love has vanquished despair. So the question we must ask is, how do we live a life of service to our God as his grateful and obedient children?

How do we live a life of freedom, not allowing ourselves to go back into the captivity and slavery of our sin? St. John the Baptist provides the model.

It's a life of humility and deference to our God. It is a life of pointing people to Jesus. It is saying, I am not worthy to loosen the straps of our Lord's sandals.

[6 : 21] In other words, it is a life of humility. Our lives are to be about Christ, who leads us like a shepherd.

And we are to be listening to his voice, rather than the voices in our own head. We are to listen and follow the voice of our good shepherd, rather than the voices which lead us astray, taking us back into a world of exile, loneliness, and separation from our God.

Therefore, as baptized Christians, we are to be living a life of perfect freedom in the service of our great God and King, Jesus, by living a life of humility and surrender to Christ.

As parents, we are not to be teaching our children that they are the center of the universe. We are to be teaching our children that they belong to God.

Therefore, all of life is about submitting to his Lordship. Jesus is King. Our child is not. But that's not only a lesson for children.

[7 : 36] It is a lesson for 99-year-old as much as it is for the newborn. You see, selfishness puts us back into the shackles of captivity.

Humility, however, is that virtue and discipline that leads us into service for our great God and King. Humility makes us think of the needs of others and not merely live life for self that makes us prisoners and captives to evil.

Friends, as we make our way to Christmas, let us humble ourselves before our God who came in complete humility by becoming man and let us worship him as our King.

And to those who listen, follow, and surrender to Christ as Lord, He gives comfort because he is our shepherd who leads us to everlasting life.

Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost.