

Advent 1 - Make ready a people prepared for the Lord

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[0 : 00] Okay, Luke chapter 1, verse 1 to 24. Over the next four weeks, we're doing an Advent series, short Advent series. It'll all come from Luke's Gospel. Beautiful Gospel, written by Dr. Luke.

He was a doctor, a medical doctor, and a missionary statesman. He accompanied Paul around the Roman world, preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Next, the wonderful thing about Luke is that he probably got most of his source material from women, and particularly the mother of Jesus, Mary. I always think it's very special when I read this, thinking it's her voice behind this.

And, of course, we need that very much when we have these early accounts, because this is stuff that only really Mary and the angels knew, and obviously John's father and Elizabeth, but passed on information that Luke recorded and set out for us.

Verse 1 says, Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who, from the first, were eyewitnesses and servants of the world.

[1 : 12] Luke's saying, I took great care in passing on to you accurate historical information. It's really important. This is not some myth, not some metaphor. This is real historical information.

Verse 3, Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account to you, most excellent Theophilus, the name means lover of God, perhaps a pseudonym, a hidden name, because he was perhaps some high-ranking Roman official, and to believe in Jesus is threatening politically, and actually also threatening to his very life if his identity is revealed.

Verse 4, So that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. Verse 5, In the time of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah.

His wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well on in years.

Once, when Zechariah's division was on duty, and he was serving as a priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

[2 : 44] And when the time for burning of incense came, all the assembled worshippers were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.

He will be a joy and delight to you. And many will rejoice because of his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from birth.

Notice that verse. I'm not going to mention it again, really, in the context of today. But it's actually really important to see that we can't limit what God does, even in small children.

And it's a delight to hear Freya. We've commented on that. We prayed and battled through for Freya for many days when her life was at risk.

[3 : 48] And who knows what God may do as a result of that. Filled with the Holy Spirit, even from birth.

Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God, and he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Zechariah asked the angel, How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is well on in years. The angel answered, I am Gabriel.

I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them, but remained unable to speak.

[4 : 59] When his time of service was complete, he returned home. After that, his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. The Lord has done this for me, she said.

In these days, he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people. Amen. And the Lord will bless to us the reading of his word. So my text today is from Luke chapter 1 and verse 17, where it is prophesied of John that he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

A people prepared. Preparation is, of course, an important word for Christmas. I don't know what it's like in your house, but we are well prepared.

Not because I am organized, but because my wife is hugely, hugely sort of excited by the thought of Christmas. It begins around about January the 20th, sorry, December the 26th and ends on December the 25th, but a whole year goes between it.

The mention of the very word is enough to get her notebook out and her planning in place. So we are well prepared, well planned, and yesterday, like clockwork, the tree went up.

[6 : 32] Okay. Everything was done orderly and in fashion. Snacks were in the freezer, they were brought out, we got the tree up, we had a lot of water on the floor because it came from a farm full of ice and snow, and eventually we got it done, got it set out, everybody was happy that the tree was as straight as it can be and as nice as it can be, and then we watched the Grinch, which is my tradition.

And now I feel all toasty inside, and I leak.

That comes from the Grinch too. But being prepared, of course, is an important message, as the next slide shows. Because it's that time of year.

And this is Olaf, another Disney character from Frozen. And he sings about that time of year, happy, merry, holly, jolly seasons, greetings here. I'm wondering what your family does at that time of year.

Love and joy and peace on earth and tidings of good cheer. Do you have tradition things for that time of year? I wish I could have sung that. That would have been great, wouldn't it? But I'm not much of a singer, but Olaf is fantastic.

[7 : 46] If you've never met him before, Frozen, it's not the main two films, it's kind of a little mini film that's on Disney. Have a look. That time of year, well, it comes around once a year, amazingly.

And we're so used to it that we kind of lose a sense of its impact. Unless, of course, we're Lisa, and then we keep it going. We call it Advent, ecclesiastically, because Advent celebrates the coming of Jesus.

The Latin word Adventus means coming from the verb advenio, which means to arrive, to come to, to develop, to set in, to arise. And I like the variation of the language because it's looking back language to the first coming of Jesus, and it's looking forward language to the second coming of Jesus.

it's the Latin substitute for the Greek word parousia, which means the royal coming, usually referring to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And when we light candles, we're anticipating this coming. There's a reason why you light one candle a week. The idea is that you increase the light as you increase your knowledge of what Advent is all about.

[9 : 17] As more and more of the teaching of our Lord Jesus is revealed to you, more and more light comes symbolically into your mind and heart, and the full light comes on Christmas Day with the lighting of the Christmas candle.

We're reminded in Scripture that Jesus is coming, coming with the clouds. Every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him, and all the world will mourn because of Him.

At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow. People will be absolutely clear about who this Jesus is when He comes. In the meantime, we see through a glass darkly, light is glowing, light is entering into our minds and hearts.

We see more and more of Him until we finally see Him as He is and become like Him. We are always in a period of Advent, not just at Christmas, but as Jesus is revealed to us more and more in our hearts by His Holy Spirit.

And so, next slide, please. John Michael Hansen in his Christmas Stories book says, as we light our Advent candles, add in a new one each week, we move from darkness to light.

[10 : 30] Our ritual symbolically anticipates the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who will actually move us from darkness to light if we will let Him. Advent invites us to worship at the manger, but if we stop there, we've missed the meaning of Christ's birth.

His Advent is the beginning of the path that takes Jesus from the light of the wonderful star that signals His birth to the terrible darkness of His full and final sacrifice.

And then, on to the blind and brilliant light of His resurrection, which is the Advent of ours. As we return to the manger, let us not forget the meaning of His birth and the purpose of His life.

He came to save, deliver, and redeem us. Oh, come, let us adore Him. It's a lovely thought. You see, we can get stuck very much when we look at a baby in a manger because babies are beautiful and they're cute and we want to cuddle them.

And the baby Jesus in the manger is an adorable-looking person. Lots of people can fall in love with very easily. Not quite the same when you look at the Christ on the cross.

[11 : 46] Not quite as attractive. He is, Isaiah says, one from whom we turn our face as He is brutalized, whipped, scourged, crucified for our sin.

But the believer sees something beautiful in the crucified Christ. We adore the crucified Christ as much as we adore the babe in the manger. And we say, actually, it's not enough just to be stuck at the babe in the manger.

We need much more. And so, Christmas is a revelation of Jesus in all that He is, in all His untold glory for us.

So we prepare. We prepare for the coming of Jesus. So how do we prepare looking at this passage in Luke chapter 1? Firstly, next slide, we prepare by looking back.

We prepare by looking back. John the Baptist was created by God in his mother's womb to become a bridge between the past and the future. He was created in his mother's womb.

[12 : 54] Let's never forget that. Every baby is a unique creation of God. We are formed fearfully and wonderfully made, the psalmist says, in our mother's womb.

And God has a purpose for each one of us. For He created us to live for His glory. That's why we celebrate every birth and lament, sadly, every death of every child.

For every baby is created in the womb of its mother and has dignity and purpose. John had a very special purpose. Luke chapter 1, verse 17, again, remember, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

What a purpose that is. John, you're going to change the nation and you're going to change people for generations to come. You're going to reconcile families together.

You're going to bring fathers and children back together and their hearts are going to turn to the Lord. And this is a fulfillment of Scripture. I think we have the text coming up next on the next slide.

[14 : 08] This is from Malachi chapter 4, verses 4 to 6, written 450 years before the birth of Christ. Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded to him at Horeb for all Israel.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers lest I come and strike the land with the decree of utter destruction.

So John is this Elijah figure who is coming who is going to redeem Israel. He's going to bring a message of redemption.

A message particularly of repentance because that's what is meant by the word turn. Turn is stand still, stop, think, turn around.

and that's what the prophet does. The prophet says stop. Stop and think about the direction of your life. Stop and think about how destructive it is, how damaging it is when you rebel against me and my laws.

[15 : 20] Stop. Take stock. Turn around and walk in the ways of God. Walk in the ways of God's law. Remember the law of Moses.

Remember. Look back to see what God has given. Turn from your old wicked ways and turn back to God.

Remember. Remember. Do you remember when you were growing up as a kid if you're a certain age and a kid is a Geordie word for child not a goat. Remember as you grew up as a kid and Bonfire Night was coming around.

What did we say? Remember. Remember. The 5th of November. Now why did we say that? We actually said it because we were worried about the Catholics overtaking the nation again one day and so we had to make sure that we always had a Protestant king and a Protestant parliament and ensured a Protestant ascension to the crown.

It was a kind of old few hundred year old reminder of the reason why Guy Fawkes and Bonfires were celebrated in the UK. Not many people would know that now or even care but that was it.

[16 : 36] The point of the word remember was to motivate. Remember. Remember. The 5th of November so you don't go back to what it was before. In the scripture there's a lovely little phrase remember Lot's wife.

Why? Because she foolishly disobeyed God looked back at Sodom and was turned into a pillar of salt. Remember Lot's wife. Don't be as foolish as she is.

Don't ignore the voice of God. Don't turn from God's law or you may end up with a similar fate. You get the point. Remember the law of Moses is a motivational instruction to go back to the law of the Old Testament to discover the ways in which we can honestly and truly and righteously follow God because you have turned from God's way.

And the reason why you are in such trouble the reason why there are such difficulties in your society is because you have forgotten to follow the righteous decrees of God.

God is going to turn the hearts of the people back to himself but you have to remember what he has instructed you to do. Now if you think of this God has spoken.

[17 : 57] God has spoken through the prophets. If you wanted to kind of get a summary of the intent of God in speaking through the prophets he gives 613 distinct laws the Jews worked out from all of that Old Testament and the mitzvot 613 distinct laws and you had to kind of follow them all to follow him.

But if you want to summarize it perhaps Micah 6 8 gets near he has told you O man what is good and what does the Lord require of you? Well he's going to explicitly say but to love kindness to do justice to love kindness and to walk humbly before your God.

That's what you've got to do. Love justice do kindness walk humbly before God. Alright that's fine I'll do that. But why would I do that?

I mean what if it would serve me not to do justice? What if it would be my advantage if I could lie or steal or cheat to get my way to the top and to be able to acquire the things that I want to live a life of happiness?

Why should I do kindness when so many people are not deserving of my kindness? Why should I walk humbly before God when I can be a big shot? It's very easy isn't it to kind of hear that and then think about your own personal drives and impulses that would kind of make you selfish and self-centered and all of that.

[19 : 29] And that is why in the Old Testament the motivational impulse for obeying the law of God is love. Love the Lord your God with all your heart your soul your mind and your strength love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus says that's what fulfills the law. Deuteronomy 6 verse 4 says hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is one and this is what he says you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your might and these words I command you today shall be on your heart you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in the house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be on the front of your eyes you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates in other words whatever you're doing wherever you are outside or inside the law of God ought to be in front of your eyes in your mind on your heart constantly and Orthodox Jews take that quite literally wearing their phylacteries with scriptures in and all kinds of things having the law of God on their doorposts and touching them as they come in and blessing God for them and everything else but the key thing to remember here is that Moses says you are to love God you are to love the Lord your God when you do this it's very easy to fall into legalism and say oh well the 613 commandments have I done this one yes tick tick yeah yeah ooh 57 maybe not ah

I'll have to work on that one 58 59 yeah yeah 65 600 wow it's easy to get into that kind of legal law keeping if you forget to love love is the motivational impulse to obedience when it comes to the law of God and it's very easy to kind of demonstrate this think of the 10 commandments if a person loves the Lord his God he will not put another God before God he will not any more than because I love my wife I would put another woman before her yeah that's just not going to happen it's not love if you do and if we love the Lord our God then we will not take his name in vain why would we insult the God we worship any more than I would insult my wife in public why would I do that it's not loving and if I'm to love the Lord my God I will want to spend time with him so I will spend a Sabbath in fellowship with my God

I will want to be with him just as I want to spend time with my wife and if I love the Lord my God I will not break his law by dishonoring my parents I will not go and commit adultery I will not steal I will not covet I will not bear faults etc etc etc why not because I am motivated by love love is the fulfillment of the law if you love you will keep the law Augustine even put in the last love and do as you will because once love motivates the heart you will always will the best for yourself and for others and especially for your God God has spoken God has written his word on our hearts and as the impulse is there the impulse of love we become we become an obedient people so as John reveals the gospel in this fallen world as he calls upon people to repent he commands them to turn from their wicked ways to God he is praying and hoping and believing that God will write a new or God will put a new spirit a new heart within the people and that the people's hearts will be turned out of love for God over 600 years before Jesus came

Hebrews 8 verse 10 says this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people he is caught in the prophet Jeremiah 600 years before Christ came God says I'm going to do some heart surgery in people I'm going to take away their sinful selfish heart I'm going to put a heart in them that loves me that beats for me and wants to obey me and then you will see the people's hearts turn if we're motivated by love we will be bent on obedience to our heavenly father Romans 7 verses 20 to 24 says and you might see yourself in this if I do what I do not want it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me so I find it to be a law that when I want to do right evil lies close at hand for I delight in the law of God in my inner being but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this body of death thanks be to God through Jesus

[24 : 56] Christ our Lord so then I myself serve the law of God with my mind but with my flesh I serve the law of sin so there is a kind of struggle going on always in the heart of the believer between the legacy the vestige of the old nature that wants to satisfy its lusts and desires and a new law that is planted transplanted written within the heart of the believer that says I want to do the law of God that's what's in my heart I know sometimes I carry around an old stranger that I don't like but he's still there and sometimes he kind of says go on you really want to don't you you really want to but then something within me says no no I don't want to it's not who I am anymore because the law of God is written in my heart

I want to do the will of God from my heart 1 John 5 1 5 and chapter up to chapter 2 verse 4 tells us what we ought to do when we feel this struggle this is the message we have heard from him and proclaimed to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all if we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not practice the truth we're pretending and the reason we're pretending is because we're kind of claiming to be something we're not if we say we don't have any sin John says no no that's not true you are aware that there is within you an impulse to satisfy your selfish desires and it's conversely true that if we say look I want to live for God and I want to walk with God and I want to honor God but I don't care about sinning in fact I quite like it and I want to do more and more of it

John says well you're a charlatan you're a fraud you're not really a man or woman of God because that's not what's in your heart let me go back to my illustration about my marriage and my wife if I said I love you but then went out and committed adultery I'm a liar and I'm a fraud and a cheat and you know that's true words matter nothing what really matters is the heart is turned to God and when the heart is turned to God obedience becomes a natural impulse out of love for God so when the angel says to Zechariah your son is going to turn the hearts of the people he's saying I'm going to make an obedient people that's my job I'm going to see people obey God and live in his ways and follow him that's what I'm coming to do as I reconcile people together

I reconcile them to God okay does that mean we never sin well John says no he says if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness if we say we have not sinned we make him sin so that you may not sin wow what a standard eh what an aim is it possible is it possible well I guess it is or else it wouldn't be commanded have I arrived there yet no do I want to arrive there yes I very much want to be a person who does not sin I have a desire within my heart that says God I want to live in a way that so honors you and does not grieve your

Holy Spirit that I might be sinless I know that that will probably only ever happen on the day that I enter into glory but it doesn't take away the desire the desire a person who truly desires to be at the top of their profession the best in their sport or whatever is never satisfied with how far they've got they're always aiming to go one better one more one more did you ever watch Hacksaw Ridge what a film that is you know when that soldier who's a pacifist didn't believe in war but he's out as a chaplain and a medic and he goes up on that ridge true story and every time he goes back he says Lord just one more one more and he crawls back into the battlefield to get a wounded soldier to lower them down to skin off his hands and all of that just one more Lord just one more I don't want to sin I don't want to grieve the

[30 : 02] Holy Spirit Lord make it as possible make it make me what is it Robert! Mary McShane said make me as holy as it is possible for a saved sinner to be make it as possible make me as holy as it is possible for a saved sinner to be I write this to you so that you do not sin but if anyone does sin thank God we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous who is the propitiation for our sin but not only for ours but for the whole world remember by looking back remember the law of Moses remember this is God's will for you let the law of God be on your heart and in your mind every day!

may you may you be able to say like the psalmist oh how I love your law it is my meditation every day God wants us to look back secondly God wants us to look forward be prepared by looking forward see John came to build a bridge John came to build a bridge between the old and the new to provide the continuity!

the prophetic voice he's fulfilling scripture he's following in the words of Malachi and Jeremiah he is the Elijah who is to come and he's pointing forward to Jesus he is a bridge between the old and the new people struggled over the identity of John even the disciples didn't quite understand in Matthew chapter 11 verses 10 to 15 Jesus says this is he of whom it is written behold I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you he's fulfilling Isaiah the prophet and Jesus says that John had a unique place in redemptive history truly I say to you among those born of a woman there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence and the violent take it by force and then

John offers this continuity for Jesus says of John the Baptist for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John and if you are willing to accept it he is the Elijah who is to come he who has ears to hear let him hear all right so what is it so here is this strange man he appears he acts as a bridge between the Old and New Testament he points forward to Jesus he says in John chapter 1 I am not Elijah and then Jesus says he is Elijah and if you have ears to hear he has come to fulfill the law he is an Elijah like figure dresses like Elijah sounds like Elijah preaches like Elijah calls people to repent just like Elijah he acts as a sign gift to the world something special is going to happen somebody really important is going to come because

John is here and like Elijah of course John the Baptist preached to corrupt kings and people in authority women who didn't like him one woman who took his head like Jezebel of old hated the voice of God and sought to shut it out so he dressed like John he preached like John he upset people just like John just like Elijah rather and yet Jesus says in Matthew chapter 17 when asked about this he says Elijah does come and he will restore all things but I tell you that Elijah has already come and they did not recognize him but did not do to him whatever they pleased so also the son of man will certainly suffer at their hands Elijah is still to come!

[34 : 50] Nab Nab kind of almost like, you know, reincarnated.

No, no, no, no. This is not one individual. It is a type, an Elijah figure. Elijah was a separate distinct human from John the Baptist, who is a separate distinct human from these two witnesses that are still in the future, but they are Elijah-like in their proclamation.

They are Elijah-like in their challenges. They are Elijah-like in terms of being signed gifts to the world that something really important is about to happen. And in John's case, he's building a bridge, and he's looking forward to Jesus.

He preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He didn't bring it himself. He preached it. When he was asked about his prophetic value, he says in John chapter 1, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, who are you then? Are you Elijah? He said, I am not. Are you the prophet? And he answered, no. So they said to him, who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us.

[36 : 21] What do you say about yourself? He said, I in the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

They asked him, then why are you baptizing if you are neither the Christ nor Elijah nor the prophet? John answered him, I baptize with water, but among you stands one that you do not even know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

I am a voice pointing forward to the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world. He acts as a bridge. We have to be prepared by looking forward.

And looking forward means thirdly, we prepare properly for Advent and properly for Christmas and properly for this life by following. When John the Baptist came as a bridge, he pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And he says, if you want to hear God's voice clearly and properly, if you want to do the will of God from your heart, if you want to fulfill the requirements of the law of God, you have to look to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[37 : 41] Jesus points us forward to the following of Jesus. When he came, when John the Baptist came, he came and said, the kingdom of God is at hand. And then years later, Jesus came.

And when Jesus came, he could announce that the kingdom of God is here. The kingdom of God has come among you. And by kingdom, of course, they did not mean some physical edifice.

What they meant was that the rule of God would come alive in the hearts of those who follow the message of God. Luke chapter 17, verse 20 to 21 says, Now when he was asked, this is Jesus by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God would come, he answered to them and said, the kingdom of God does not come with observation, nor will they say, see here or see there.

For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you. It transforms you. It changes you from the inside out. When Nicodemus asked about the kingdom of God, Jesus says, you have to be born again to enter the kingdom of God.

And how does that born again happen? It happens as the spirit of God enters into the life of the person who inquires after God so that they are transformed and become children of God.

[39 : 04] You must be born again. The kingdom of God must enter into you. And when it enters into you, then you will no longer seek the things of this world.

You will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things shall be added to you. Notice, you will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Remember the law of Moses. You get changed from the inside out. And the law of God is written on your hearts. And your impulse and your motivation is to do righteousness.

So we came full circle. In finding Jesus, we discover that John's prophecy and John's purpose is fulfilled to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, the children to the fathers for generations to come.

How do we prepare for Advent? We prepare for Advent by looking back. Remember the law of Moses. We must never think that the Old Testament law is something to be set aside as if God has lowered his standards just to give us a helping hand.

[40 : 26] He never lowers his standards. God never sinks to our level. He always brings us up to his. And so we must honor and cherish God's law.

But we must be motivated not by desire to be morally superior to other people, but out of love for God to seek to do his will from our hearts.

We prepare for Advent by looking forward. John has built us a bridge to show us Jesus and to say that the way to honor and obey God is to submit to his son, to receive his son, the Lord Jesus, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And so, a final quote. This too from John Michael Hansen. With the arrival of Advent, Christians everywhere turn again toward the Savior.

Advent marks the beginning of the celebration of his birth and his long-foretold ministry, atonement, death, resurrection, and second coming. If Advent is an occasion when I return my eyes to the Savior, then it is also an invitation to consider where my eyes and my heart have been in the meantime.

[41 : 50] Advent is the gentle nudge that invites me to remember that the truth most worth knowing is that Jesus Christ is the only way home. It is also a gentle reminder that I ought to keep my eyes upon him all year long.

for Jesus is for life, not just for Christmas. Let us pray. skill skill