

Nov 28th - Advent 1 - Mission

Jeremiah 33. 14-16

Luke 21. 25-36

Here's some classic Advent readings.

Advent - which means arrival - is about both the first arrival of Jesus on this planet, but also the second arrival - that terrible day, when people will "faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world"

Well its going to have to be pretty bad to shock a world that has come through Donald Trump and a global pandemic.

There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.

Advent all about preparing for Christmas - but not enjoying it yet remember!

Think of those spending their time "weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life"

Weighed down with it I say! And go 'tut tut'!

And

And Jeremiah predicts a saviour, one from King David's line - and says - "hold on" the promise is coming.

Do we really think he is coming back? Or do we think he's forgotten us, or its just poetry? I wonder how much we take it seriously?

I ask that because sometimes it doesn't seem like we do.

If we lived in an earthquake zone? You take it seriously.

You know what it can do - you practice getting under the table, or to the shelter.

And if new people arrive in town, you tell them what to do.

It wasn't an earthquake, but when we used to go to Lincolnshire for the Beach Mission, way out on the coast there, every Weds at 11am, the flood siren went - just for a minute or two. The first time I was like - waaay! What's that? And then someone explained.

If you live with high risk, or high threat, you need to be alert, you need a warning system, you need to make sure everyone knows.

So I ask again - do we think that Jesus coming back again is real, is a risk, a threat in some way? Where's our warning system? Who's on watch? What's the signal?

Or maybe you think Jesus coming back is going to be a lovely thing. The Jews were keen for the Day of the Lord for a long time, before the prophets reminded them that it would be judgement for them too!

But even if it were the best visit - like the Queen and Judy Dench combined - you'd still get ready wouldn't you? You'd have a lookout, you'd make preparations, you'd keep the place really spic and span, and for sure you'd tell your neighbours!! Guess who we've got coming? Oh when are they here? I don't know but I'll tell you as soon as I find out.

So again - do we think he's coming back - for good or bad?

Because I think, if thought about it, it might change the way we live a bit...

I used to have a badge that said. - Jesus is coming! And underneath is small writing - Look busy!

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Just a little quiz now, and its ok - you can confer!

Turn to your neighbour - make sure you've got a neighbour.

Say hi - if you don't know each other

OK - Can you remember the mission of this parish. - mission is like an aim or purpose.

I'll give you a clue - it's got 2 parts - this and this..

Yes - to love God, and to love our neighbour.

Jesus snappy condensing of the 613 commandments of the old testament.

And how do we do that?

We love God by coming to church, by reading and studying the bible, by prayer - with others and on our own, by spending time with him. By showing we are serious in following him by giving him of our money, time and skills.

We love our neighbour - by literally popping in on them to check they're ok.

By helping those most in need

- so we support all sorts of charities

- in time and things - jumble or food for Poitiers

But also money - here's what we've given in the last 4 weeks!...

Poitiers coffee morning - £400

Royal British Legion - £271.44.

Children's Society Boxes - £372

Barnardo's - £87

That's over £1000 - which is amazing!

And we're kind, and forgiving and all that stuff.

So why do we not tell them about Jesus coming?

No I don't really mean that! That would be a big leap, very direct, challenging, offensive!

But... you might tell them "the reason for the hope you have"

You see, we live in a world which is a bit short of hope at the moment.

Humanity has been defeated by a tiny organism we can't see.

And politicians and money and business and even love and clapping for the NHS, didn't shift it.

People are afraid, the world is not going the right way.

So there's a need for hope.

Worldly hope - which is looking for solutions or trying to see the best in things is about getting back to normal

I hope we'll do Christmas this year

Its about expected things and when they will happen

And its fine, its like distilled optimism. Nothing wrong with it.

But its not like Christian Hope.

Christian hope - comes from outside, from beyond us

- its unimaginable or unthinkable

- not a lifting up by bootstraps but help from outside.

Christian Hope is about a person. Jesus.

All my hopes - for happiness, for joy, for justice, for healing - are in him.

He is the 7th cavalry coming over the hill.

He is the rescue plan.

And...

Nothing makes sense until it all makes sense.

The justice for the world will only happen when all the world is just

He is the final piece in the jigsaw

He is the thread that draws it all together -

When he comes back, it will all make sense, it will all finally add up

Then all our longings will be fulfilled

That's why Jesus coming back is amazing!

There will be no more suffering, but there will be answers, we'll know why!

We will know what everything means when God brings the ending.

And Only God can bring the ending.

So - have hope - there is an ending, he will return.

When you feel despair or overcome by fear or weighed down - remember

He will come - he has been promised - and he who promises is faithful and true.

And when your neighbour, when they start on that grumble and moan, and its all getting worse... you don't even have to say it - just be that calm presence that says - but it will be ok. (Because Jesus is coming back)