

Advent: The Coming of Our Savior // LOVE

Well. They're back on TV already! The commercials where people wake up on Christmas morning to a brand new Mercedes Benz in the driveway. They do realize those come with car payments! Every year, I see it. I see Black Friday lines, store sales, commercials, greed, and I wonder to myself, "Is this what Christmas is really all about, the gifts?" And, I always answer, "Yes. It's all about the Gift!"

Today, as we continue our series, "Advent: The Coming of Our Savior", we look at this great Gift from God to us. He is named Jesus. He is Savior. He is our Christ Messiah. He is Immanuel, God with us. He is the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. He is our King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And, He is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

But, most importantly, Jesus is the greatest expression of God's LOVE that humanity, people like us, will ever know. Certainly, we hear all about God's everlasting love for us throughout the Old Testament. David, for example, in 1 Chronicles 16:34 (ESV), says, "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" Note: Lord, good, love, steadfast, endures, forever, and us.

And, this expression of God's love for us in Jesus, is most clearly captured in John 3:16 (ESV). Jesus says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." When an angel of the Lord told Joseph and Mary to give their son, God's Son, the name, Jesus, they did so because He would save the sins of the world, once, for ALL.

This Advent/Christmas, remember God's love for you in Jesus. And, remember 1 Timothy 2:4 (ESV), "God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." This includes all your family and friends. This includes all your neighbors and people from "all nations". This includes all the homeless, hungry, helpless, and hopeless. And, this even includes your enemies (Matt. 5:44).

Let's pray! Lord God, 1 John 4:7-8 (ESV) says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." Lord, this Advent/Christmas, help us receive Your love for us in the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. And, help us share Him with the world we live in.

Amen.

Scripture Reading

“18Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ 22All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us). 24When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.” - Matthew 1:18-25 (ESV)

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Message Series

Advent - The Coming of Our Savior

Message Topic

Love

Message Points

NOTES:

Memory Verse

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” - John 3:16 (ESV)

Small Group Questions

- Besides Jesus, what's the one gift you want more than any other this year? Why do you want that particular gift over so many others?
- Read 1 Chronicles 16:34. What do we learn from this Old Testament verse about God's everlasting love for us? Why should we give thanks for it?
- Read John 3:16. Why is this verse so important to the Christmas story? What does it teach us about God's love for us in Jesus Christ?

- Read I Timothy 2:4. Why is Jesus the greatest gift God could ever give us? Why does God want all people to know Jesus and be saved?
- Who do you know that needs to know the Good News of Jesus Christ this Christmas? How will you spread God's love to them?

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Children's Message

Boys and girls, this morning, we continue the season of Advent. Does anyone remember what that word, Advent, means? *Take answers.*

The word "Advent" means "Coming" or "Arrival". During Advent, we look forward to the coming or arrival of Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Savior.

Over here, I have an Advent wreath. Each week, we will be lighting a candle. Last week, we lit the first purple candle, called the "Hope" and/or "Prophecy" candle. Does anyone know what this second purple candle is called? *Take answers.*

This second Sunday of Advent, the candle lit is the "Bethlehem Candle". We light it in remembrance of God's LOVE for us in Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, in a manger. Ok. Who wants to help me light it! *Have one of them help light.*

Let's pray. Lord, Thank you for Advent/Christmas. Thank you for the arrival of Jesus. Help us ALL to look with anticipation for the coming of our Savior, Jesus.