

## The Promise of His Coming and His Presence (On His Terms)

- Throughout the Advent Season we celebrated the “waiting” and “looking forward” to the Coming of The Lord!
- We practiced a type of “divine expectation” of God’s promise to come and be near us!
- We can all agree that the “fulfilled promise” to come near is awesome, but the “patient waiting” was not!

Isaiah 35:1-6 (NIV)

1 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. 3 Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; 4 say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.” 5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

- This is Isaiah’s words and description when Messiah comes!
- I. When we look back at the early Church and the observing of the Christian Calendar we see a “practice of waiting” in Christian Worship that is so missing in many traditions today!
- A. First, we are not good at waiting! We want what we want and now!
1. We also refuse other traditions without even considering the benefit to our faith.
  2. The question should be, will this practice enhance my love for Jesus and increase my submission and devotion to Him?
  3. I’m not suggesting something that I “must do to be saved” but rather a way of drawing me closer in my daily devotion to Christ!
- B. Considering the Prophets of old, we see a constant encouragement and waiting in the practice of their faith and in communicating that practice to God’s people around them!
1. That is the very subject of the poetry and book of Isaiah!
  2. We see this portrayed explicitly in the “Hall of Fame of Faith!”

Hebrews 11:13 (NIV)

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

3. The people of God have always waited!
4. Even though from our vantage point Messiah HAS COME, we still wait for creation to catch up with the redemption God has provided!

C. Your daily walk in Christ is one of patiently waiting on the fulfillment of Christ's salvation! Be patient with the world around you! You are certainly glad God is patient with you!

1. God is always acting...even when it doesn't look like He is!
2. We are looking for the "explosion" and the "sensational," but usually God moves in the quiet and mundane!
3. I believe that's part of the reason many didn't recognize Jesus when He came!
4. How dramatic, explosive and sensational does this sound? (Notice the description Jesus gave to His disciples...)

Matthew 13:24 (NIV)

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.

Matthew 13:33 (NIV)

33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

D. This is what Jesus said in the midst of these two descriptive words about His coming near!

Matthew 13:14-17 (NIV)

14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' 16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. 17 For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

II. Isaiah's poetic descriptions and prophetic promises was one of the restorations of God's creation through the coming Messiah and Savior.

A. Let's look at the "fulfillment of this poetic prophecy" and get a feeling for its reality!

1. John the Baptist, who was the cousin of Jesus, sent word to ask Jesus if "He was really the promised Messiah" because things didn't seem to happen the way it was expected!

Matthew 11:1-3 (NIV)

1 After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. 2 When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

2. Notice closely what Jesus' answer was!

Matthew 11:4-5 (NIV)

4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

3. Is this not EXACTLY what Isaiah said?
4. Yes...blind will see, deaf will hear and the lame walk!
5. In other words, Jesus is answering John's question by saying, "Is what you saw from Me, not what the Prophets spoke of concerning what I would do?"

B. Here is the real issue: It didn't look the way it ought to look!

1. Jesus didn't look like all the "other conquerors" they had seen.
2. "Jesus, when are You going to explosively set up your kingdom?"
3. "Jesus, when are You going to put on a sensational show as you take over?"
4. "Hey Lord, can we sit on Your right and left and be a part of the new administration when you kill all the Romans?"
5. Remember Peter's sword! That was the mentality!

C. Now, look closely at one of Jesus' ignored statements that happens to explain it all!

Matthew 11:6 (NASB)

6 And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”

Matthew 11:6 (TPT)

6 And tell John that the blessing of heaven comes upon those who never lose their faith in me—no matter what happens!”

1. Does this “waiting at Advent” offend you?
2. Do you grow weary and become offended that God doesn’t “do something already” with all the bad in the world?
3. John preached the coming of Messiah as a forerunner, yet he never saw the resurrection! How is that fair!
4. Don’t we often cry out, “Jesus, would you just do something”?

D. Isaiah felt the same way!

Isaiah 64:1-2 (NIV)

1 Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! 2 As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you!

1. Does it offend you when God doesn’t?
2. When evil prevails do you question God?
3. If so, you are in the company of John the Baptist!! And others!

III. Jesus is about establishing His Kingdom and NOT about conforming to your expectations!

A. All of life is about: The agenda of The Father, with the authority of The Son through work of The Spirit!

1. Our purpose is submitting to what He is doing in the earth!
2. Remember what Jesus said to Pilot, “My kingdom is not of this world!”
3. Jesus told His followers, “You are in this world, but not of it!”
4. Jesus did not and will not serve anyone else’s agenda, program or cause!

B. We actually see this played out in Christ’s time!

1. The Pharisees were the “moral police” of the day and tried to get Jesus to “join their cause” and tell people what they could and couldn’t do! Jesus refused to join them!
2. The Sadducees were the “worship police” of the day and tried to get people to observe Temple worship properly! Jesus refused to join them!
3. The Zealots were those ready to “go to battle” and slaughter in the name of God for the sake of God! Jesus refused to join them!
4. The Essenes were those who were so spiritually minded that the present physical needs of the world were irrelevant! Jesus refused to join them!
5. Bottom line, Jesus made all of them mad and they all wanted Him crucified!

C. They were offended! Theologian Carl Barth said, “God cannot serve...He can only rule!”  
Let me speak plainly...

1. God will not join your cause...because He has a bigger agenda!
2. Jesus will not join the Republican cause or the Democratic cause!
3. He will not promote the conservative or the progressive agenda!
4. When will we understand that God is not promoting our case or agenda no matter how noble it is!
5. May we be like Jesus when He said, “I do what I see the Father doing and I say what I hear the Father saying!”

D. Simply put; God is actively establishing His kingdom! He will not join, authorize, promote or submit to our causes or agendas!  
It’s time we completely submit to His!

\*\*\* Are you offended with Jesus? \*\*\*