

Sunday, November 30, 2008

John 15:26-27

Come

Jesus came into a world waiting for his arrival. The Jews knew the world is not the way it is supposed be. In their services they would plead for the messiah to come. And he did, just not in the way they expected him to come.

As we follow Jesus now we know that he has come and fulfilled the prophets' predictions. At the same time, we still wait. We wait for the complete fulfillment of his kingdom. Advent not only prepares us for the coming of a King born into a stable, it points us to the eventual return of our King. We too cry out "come." During Advent we look to the time when there will be no more tears, or pain, or death. As we wait, Jesus gives us a promise--the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us confidence in our hearts to know that Jesus will come again.

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word Advent?
2. What are some traditions you observe during Advent?
3. Have you ever experience the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart?
4. Do you honestly hope the Second Coming will come soon? Why or why not? Do you ever think about the Second Coming?
5. What's a new Advent tradition you could start this year to help keep you focused on the goodness of God?

Sunday, December 7, 2008

John 20:26-28

Prepare

From the earliest of day, humans have known God is like no other (Deut. 10:17). In this passage we are reminded how difficult it is to get our minds around the ways in which God works. Thomas cannot believe Jesus has risen from the dead. If you had just attended the funeral of a friend only to hear they had risen from the dead 3 days later, would you believe it? The evidence stands right in front of him, he cannot deny it. What would it take for you to believe?

As followers of Jesus today we have to remember some people have trouble believe this incredible fact, Jesus rose from the grave. If we're honest though, the fact that God became a human being is even more remarkable. To accept any of this takes more than normal understanding, it takes the work of the Holy Spirit. If we want openness to that work in our lives and in the lives of others, we need to prepare.

1. What are some preparations you have made in the last week?
2. What are the implications of God being other?
3. When is a time God has surprised you?
4. Have you ever identified with Thomas in this story? How?
5. How are you preparing for the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?



Sunday, December 14, 2008

John 10:37-38

Rejoice

Reading the book *The Shack* has gotten me thinking about the Trinity. What does it mean for God to be three different persons, yet still have one substance? How does the Trinity interact with each person? Reformed theology has good reason for calling the Trinity a mystery. However, we do get some glimpse into the life of the Trinity in this passage. Jesus says, “the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” In the person of Jesus we see one of the persons of the Trinity. In substance the members are different. Yet in will, all three member desire the same thing.

My daughter has actually gotten this down pretty well, at least for three. She like the creation story at the beginning of her children’s Bible. The story asks the question: “Who created everything?” To which Ana will answer, “God created everything, but I just call him Jesus.” Just in case you think she has gotten off here, I would refer you to Colossians 1. Jesus has shown us what we need to know about God most of all--his will. While we don’t know everything about God, we can rejoice that Christ has shown us all we need for life and faith.

1. What’s your favorite image of the Trinity?
2. What evidence does Jesus give concerning his connection to the Father?
3. What part of the Trinity is a “mystery” to you?
4. How are Jesus and the Father the same? How are they different?
5. What difference does the Trinity make in our lives?

Sunday, December 21, 2008

John 14:27

Glory

As Jesus entered the world, he entered into the middle of violence. Rome brought peace--at a great price. God has blessed us to not have a war primarily fought on our soil in over 100 years. Yet, if we turn on the news we can see war all over the world. The 20th century was the most violent century in history and the 21st century isn’t shaping up to be much better. While we don’t have a war on our soil right now, we can face disruptions to our peace. Some of us live with chaos in our homes because of conflict between two or more family members. Still others face hostility from their boss or co-workers every day. If we look to the world we’re going to have a hard time finding peace.

Christ comes as the King of Glory to bring us peace--a peace that passes all understanding. In the midst of his own war torn world, Jesus showed a different path to peace from Rome’s. As we come to his incarnation today, God still speaks peace to us through his Holy Spirit. This Christmas, Jesus wants to speak peace to your life.

1. Does Christmas bring you more peace or less?
2. What is the context of the words Jesus speaks in this passage?
3. How are you seeking Christ’s peace this Christmas?
4. What does peace mean to you?
5. How can you help someone else to be more peaceful?

Christmas Eve -- Have a great Christmas. It is a blessing to be your pastor!!! Remember what Christ has done this Christmas. Read about the birth of Jesus in Luke 1-3.
~ Merry Christmas

