

Re-Heading the Creation

Sermon 2017-12-03 - Year B - Advent 1 - The Rev. Christopher M. Klukas
Isaiah 64:1–9a; Psalm 80:1–7; 1 Corinthians 1:1–9; Mark 13:24–37

Begin with the end in mind

- The first Sunday of Advent is the first day of the Church year. Happy New Year!
- “Advent” come from two latin words “ad” which means “to” and “venire” which means “come.” A simple definition would be “the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event.”
- The season of Advent came into the church year as a season of preparation for the celebration of Christmas. In this season we focus on the two “Advents” of Christ.
 - His coming at the time of the incarnation, more than 2000 years ago.
 - His coming again, sometime in the future.
- It is always good to begin with the end in mind. When you begin a project, you want a clear picture of the goal so that you will know when you have accomplished it.
 - When you build a house you have blueprints
 - When you take a trip, you plot out your course on a map
 - When you cook you know what the dish is supposed to look at taste like
- As we begin the season of Advent, and the whole of the Church year, we always begin with the second Advent and Jesus’ promise that he will return.

Recapitulation - Irenaeus

- What will this return mean? Restoration, of all that is broken and wrong in the world.
- Chip and Joanna Gaines, stars of the TV show “Fixer Upper,” help families to buy ugly, broken houses and turn them into beautiful dwellings. This is a beautiful image of the way God restores us.
- God meets us where we are, broken and sinful, and he holds out his hands to pull us out of the muck and mire.
- But he doesn’t just do this for us as individuals, he is doing it to his whole creation!
- Romans 8:19-23 “The creation waits with eager longing...”
- So we cry out at the the people of God, “Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.” (Psalm 80:3, 7, 18, BCP 1979)
- Robert Webber talking about recapitulation (lit. “re-heading” from Eph 1:10): “This hope, this expectation of the renewal of all things in Christ, is also the vision in which the whole church lives. No matter how effectively the powers of evil now rage, they are doomed. Evil is not ultimate. Evil is not the final word in human existence. The final word is Jesus Christ. The vision of new heavens and a new Earth is no fantasy. It is the reality, the truth. Therefore, it is the hope that lies behind everything we do as Christians.”¹
- Rev 21:1-5 New heavens and a new earth. “Behold, I am making all things new.”
- This is the end we have in mind as we walk through each an every day. God is restoring us and he is restoring his whole creation. He is making all things new!

¹ Webber, Robert E. *Ancient Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 60.

- In the meantime we wait with eager longing.

Stay Awake

- Playing left field in baseball. One day in gym class my moment came and the ball hit me on the head!
- Mark 13:32-33 - Jesus calls us to stay alert as we await his second coming.
- “In the midst of many details that are puzzling, two main principles are clear. First, the Christian is to avoid unhealthy interest in the actual date, and secondly, we are to see the very uncertainty as to the date as a strong stimulant to ceaseless watchfulness.”²
 - How many times have predictions about the Lord’s return been made a publicized only to have the date come with no significance.
 - This year, a major news story was going around about a man named David Meade who was predicting, based on his interpretation of various numbers in the Bible and constellations and planets in the sky, that Sept. 23 of this year might be the beginning of the end. He was quoted in the paper saying “The world is not ending, but the world as we know it is ending. A major part of the world will not be the same the beginning of October.”³
 - As much as we might like to know, Jesus was very clear that no one knows when he will return. Even he doesn’t know. Only the Father knows.
 - Instead of worrying about when, he calls us to wait expectantly.
- Do you ever wonder, “why hasn’t the Lord returned yet?” This is a question that many were asking the the early church as well.
 - 2 Peter 3:8-9 - God is not slow, but patient.
- 1 Corinthians 1:8 - God will sustain you until the day of his coming

Get Busy

- Staying awake doesn’t just mean waiting around for the Lord’s return, it also means getting busy with the work he is already doing.
- Jeremiah 29:7 - Seek the welfare of the city, God’s letter to the exiles in Babylon by the hand of Jeremiah.
- Beginning with Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, the Kingdom of God is already breaking into this world, and we are a part of it.
- The Kingdom of God exists wherever Christ is King.
- Jesus reigns in our hearts as Christians, so we are called to be agents of this Kingdom.
- We are to cause flourishing, to cause beauty, and redemption, and restoration. To be the “aroma of Christ” (2 Cor 2:15) in the world.
- In our own little ways, we should be able to say with Jesus, “Behold, I am making all things new!”

² R. Alan Cole, Mark: An Introduction and Commentary (vol. 2; Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 287.

³

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/09/17/the-world-as-we-know-it-is-about-to-end-again-if-you-believe-this-biblical-doomsday-claim/?utm_term=.1f90a163facb