

Sermon Transcript
November 27, 2022

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Lord and Savior, whose heroic course has begun. He has come, or He is about to come, at least that is what we are celebrating. Yet, the course has begun. We are at the beginning, but we're also kind of at the end. If you notice, if you remember from last week, we sang the same hymn, hymn 516 about the night is near, and Christ is coming. It was on purpose. I didn't forget that we sang it last week and chose it again this week. No, we tied the last week of the church year with the first week of the church year. Why? Because the last week is... When we talk about the end of the year, the end of all things, we tend to think about the end. Our own personal end, or the end when Christ comes again.

That theme for the last Sunday of the church year is about His second coming. The theme of the first Sunday of the church year is about His coming. His first coming and anticipating that and celebrating that, but also celebrating and anticipating His second coming. We're not celebrating Advent just because we remember some little kid was born in Bethlehem in a horse trough. That's not the point. We celebrate that because of who He is, what He did, and what we look forward to. If He had just been a normal kid born under strange circumstances, born in a stable in the trough, we wouldn't be here today, if that's all He did. But that's not all He did because the whole point of Him being born like us was so that He could pay the penalty of the sin like us.

You see, the Apostle, Paul, talks about the commandments, especially the last seven, the things about relating with each other. Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet. Those are the easy ones. Yet, when you look at them... On the surface, I can say I've never murdered anybody. Thank you. But the reality of it is Jesus made it very clear if you said in your heart, you hate your brother, you've committed murder. Okay, well I guess I'm subject to that one.

Don't commit adultery. Well, I can safely say I haven't done that. But if you lust your heart after another woman, you've committed adultery. Okay, do not covet. Well, we're all guilty of that because American culture is based on coveting. Let's face it, if you just drink the right beer, or buy the right car, or live in the right city,

or do whatever it is or buy the right thing, you will eventually be happy, until the next great thing comes out and then you need to buy that to really be happy. Our entire culture is based on coveting. When we look at these commandments, we must admit, I'm guilty. Not to mention, love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, all your mind, and all your soul. Well, that one's out the window pretty quickly.

We're hopeless in obeying the commandment. We need someone like us so that he can do the job that we could not. Jesus was born. He's got human DNA. He's got a mind. He's got a body. He's got a soul, just like you and me. But He is more. He is exactly like us, but He's more than us, because He is also God. As God and man joined together in one person, He can do what none of us could do. Obey the law perfectly. He could actually love His neighbor as Himself. He could actually live in love and therefore fulfill the law.

He came, and we remember that He came because He fulfilled the law. That culminated... Fulfilling the law was fine but fulfilling the law and then paying for the guilt of us not being able to fulfill the law. That's where the joy resides. If He had just lived a perfect life as a man, again, you and I wouldn't be here, because if a man fulfills the law perfectly, then he saves himself, if He was just a man, but He's more than that. He is God. Therefore, when He fulfills the law, He fulfills it for all of us. Then He takes all of that, He gives us the perfect life that He lived, and then He takes upon himself all the sin that we have done, and He puts it on the cross, and He suffers for our sake.

Not only does He live a perfect life, but He pays for our sin and then He gives that perfect life to us. The great exchange. Therefore, we are here, because of Easter. If Good Friday and Easter had not happened, we would not be here with all these beautiful lights and decorations and wonderful colors and everything else that makes this church so beautiful today. But it's because of Easter, because He rode on that donkey, the conquering savior. Admittedly, not conquering like we would imagine. I've ridden a horse, and, on a horse, you feel kind of majestic. You're up above everybody else on this massive creature and your feet don't even reach down to its belly. You're just sitting up high. It feels kind of regal. It really does.

Then you ride a donkey. There's nothing regal about riding a donkey. You get on a donkey; your legs are practically touching the ground as you're riding. There's nothing there and you're just flopping around. The donkey is not a majestic steed.

Think about it. Eeh Haw is not a rallying cry that inspires inspiration. It just isn't. Yet, that is the creature upon which Jesus enters Jerusalem as the descendant of King David to restore peace, because His conquering was not a physical war. Because His kingdom is not a physical place.

Jeremiah talks about the hope that we have in Christ. He says, no longer are we going to say we love God who brought us out of the land of Egypt. That was an Old Testament act. But there's going to be a new time when He brings us not out of Egypt, but out of this land of sorrow and pain and sin and hardship and death. He's going to bring us out of this land. He is going to take us to our own land. A land of peace for all eternity. That's not Israel, or America, or Russia, or China, or any other nation that currently exists. There will be people from all those places in this new land, but it's not about the land, because this land is going to be destroyed in His second coming, which we are celebrating and looking forward to in the advent of our king.

In the second coming, He will restore a new heaven and a new earth. It's going to be so much better than the here and the now. It's going to be so much more wonderful than what we see. Even the most pristine and beautiful places on this planet earth that we see are nothing compared to what it's going to be in Christ. That's just describing where we dwell, yet alone with whom we dwell. The with whom is a big thing because we will be with Christ. He will be our king. We will see Him in all of his glory, and we will be restored to perfection. Every tear will be wiped from our eyes. What a glorious day that will be.

We get all excited about Christmas. We love the lights. We love the colors. We love the festival, the presents, the pageantry. Everything about Christmas is wonderful and exciting and beautiful. That's just a memory of Him coming 2000 years ago. Imagine what it's going to be like when we see Him. The beauty and the majesty and the joy and the peace that we will experience is going to be beyond what we can possibly imagine. That is the advent that we are looking forward to.

We remember His first advent and celebrated with beauty, but we look forward even more to the second advent where the beauty and the majesty and the glory and the might and the power and the peace and the joy and the comfort is going to be beyond comparison. It's going to be at last for all eternity because He died, but He did something no one else has done. He rose from the dead and stayed alive. Everybody else, even the people that Jesus raised from the dead, like Lazarus and

the Widow's son and all that, they did rise from the dead, but eventually they went back to the grave. Jesus did not, nor will we.

What a blessed day that is. Let us celebrate the advent of our King, absolutely, but let's remember which Advent we're really excited about, His second coming in glory. Let that hold you firm and secure in the hope and the knowledge of your salvation that nothing can take you away from His glorious love for you. May that grace, mercy, peace, and love be in and abide with you always, now, and forever more unto life everlasting. Amen.