

**Luke 3: 1 – 6**

**December 6, 2009**

**Second Sunday in Advent**

**Let us pray:**

You are coming, O God, Coming to judge us against which we cannot stand. You come to judge our perjury and adultery, lying to make ourselves rich, have our 15 minutes of fame, cheating to tickle our fantasies, swap partners like cars.

You come to judge our defrauding the poor swindling those who deserve a living wage forced to settle for less, bilking those trying to stay even into working 2 and 3 jobs.

You are coming, O God, Coming to judge us against which we cannot stand.

You come to judge our oppression of widows and orphans, smothering their grief and loss, mourning a loved one's passing ignoring their loneliness and isolation, feelings of abandonment.

You come to judge our injustice against the alien, abusing the migrant who picks our grapes and harvests our tomatoes discriminating when they attend our schools

or enter our emergency rooms.

Come Lord Jesus, teach us to make offerings of justice, sacrifices of righteousness.

May we be faithful to family and friend, spouse and children, true to our covenants, genuine in our affections.

May we be buttress working people, enforce fair wages, nourish hospitable environments, protect against harassment.

Come Lord Jesus, teach us to make offerings of justice sacrifices of righteousness.

May we comfort the widow and orphan, succor their tears heal their brokenness, care for their burdens.

May we demonstrate hospitality to the stranger, invite them to share our bounty, nourish their needs, soothe their wounds.

Come Lord Jesus, teach us to make offerings of justice sacrifices of righteousness.

Come Lord Jesus  
Come now! Amen.

They say that confession is good for the soul. Today I begin with a confession. A confession on a personal issue that I have come to realize is both bane and blessing. I confess....I like happy endings, I prefer comforting sermons. As a pastor I don't like to leave people wondering about their place with God. This past Wednesday evening during our mid week Advent worship I wanted desperately to bring only good news of hope and consolation to those in attendance. After all, it's that time of the year that is supposed to be only 'HO HO HOish". How do we embrace, how do we connect the jolliness of the secular Christmas with the contemplation of the Advent call to ponder our desperate states and rest on the words of Scripture; words which remind us that despite the judgments which can be leveled against us, we await the

coming of the King and then see the salvation of God?  
How do we live and own our time as people who prefer to  
be comforted instead of afflicted by the words of  
Scripture?

The secular stuff of the gift filled holiday crowds,  
crowd out the time in which we are called to prayerfully  
contemplate our own preparedness to stand before God,  
woefully sin filled, counting on his grace and mercy.  
Advent as a time of waiting calls us to wait in hope for our  
much needed salvation, a salvation which will come only  
through that baby in the manger; a salvation that will cost  
that baby his life so that we might have life eternal. We  
can only be properly and deeply joyous after we own that  
message, when we own our own dark selves, crying for  
the salvation we so desperately need.

God's promises come to us through Scripture in many ways. Through the Book of Jeremiah we have been contemplating hope through the eyes of people who, in the midst of devastation at their own hands look up and seek forgiveness, trusting in God's mercy. We see a people who are teaching us to wait well, to live in a state of sorrow for their sins and anticipate that God has not forgotten them. Are we so far from those people of the ancient Holy City of Jerusalem? I think not.

Our opening pray today for the second Sunday of Advent, was a difficult one. I say that because in the *holiday season*, who wants to think about “perjury, adultery, swindling the poor and abusing migrant workers?” But.... in the Advent season, as people waiting for the coming of the one who brings salvation for our

sinful-filled souls we pray that we, in this waiting time might be “faithful and make offerings of justice, sacrifices of righteousness, demonstrate hospitality to the stranger .” and offer the words “ Come Lord Jesus, Come now!”

In the Book of Jeremiah, chapters 30 – 33 are identified as the Book of Restoration. These words are hope filled for the lost people of Israel. I would like us to hear them today as the words that will accompany us on our continuing journey of Advent waiting:

**18** "This is what the LORD says:  
" 'I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's tents  
and have compassion on his dwellings;  
the city will be rebuilt on her ruins,  
and the palace will stand in its proper place.

<sup>19</sup> From them will come songs of thanksgiving  
and the sound of rejoicing.  
I will add to their numbers,  
and they will not be decreased;  
I will bring them honor,  
and they will not be disdained.

<sup>20</sup> Their children will be as in days of old,  
and their community will be established  
before me;  
I will punish all who oppress them.

<sup>21</sup> Their leader will be one of their own;  
their ruler will arise from among them.  
I will bring him near and he will come close to  
me,  
for who is he who will devote himself  
to be close to me?'  
declares the LORD.

<sup>22</sup> " 'So you will be my people,  
and I will be your God.' "

Let us pray:

**In Advent time we wait with longing for the coming  
of the Lord for the coming of the Lord.**

**Father in heaven, our hearts desire the warmth of your love and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ our Savior**

**and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence and welcoming the light of his truth. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.**