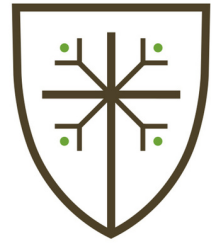


SERMON NOTES



Life in Between Two Advents

December 10, 2023

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"Our Exilic Identity"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Isaiah 40:1-8

1 Peter 1:1, 13-17; 2:11-12

Mark 1:1-8

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Especially at this time of year, how do you see yourself being pulled to one side or the other of the tension in which we live as Christians?
2. What is the comfort in knowing that our identity rests in simply being God's children?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

Every Advent, we are told that Advent is a time of waiting. But what is it that we have to do in order to wait and watch for our coming King? Tim gave two answers to that question this week.

Embrace the Tension

In 1 Peter, Peter refers to Christians as exiles. And as we looked at last week, exiles are those who have a home but aren't currently there. They are outcasts, unwanted, wandering as they seek to hold on to their identity in a foreign land with the hope of one day returning home. But Peter also calls us "beloved." We are exiles, but we are also beloved by our Father. And this is where the tension lies. Because we will be slandered, mistreated, and called foolish for our lives as Christians, but we live in the hope of the immense love of our Heavenly Father and the inheritance that we possess even now in part as his children. It's tempting to want to escape the tension, to lean too far into one side or the other, to "conform to the passions of this world" as Peter says, or to withdraw completely from it, looking down on everything and everyone else. There is an unavoidable tension in the life of a Christian. And that is why Peter calls us to "be sober-minded" people, even and especially in a culture that is not a sober one. To be sober is to be steady, to be alert, to hold an even course, and not be swayed by the passions and desires that seek to pull us every which way. As Christians, we ultimately live for the world to come and for he who will bring it. And in order to do so, we must stay awake and alert and live into the tension.

Know Your Identity

Christians are not just referred to as "exiles" but as "elect exiles" in 1 Peter. And, in Scripture, being chosen and being loved go hand in hand. God loves us because he chose us and he chose us because he loves us. It is a pervasive lie in the culture today that identity is discovered individually. We must do something to achieve and secure that which gives us value. In every other culture throughout history, identity was conferred upon you. Before you are even born, you are known and you are loved. Tim told the story here (which you should go listen to in the sermon) of a couple who experienced a late-term miscarriage and a stillbirth. But even though the parents had never even seen their baby girl with life in her eyes, they loved her and they continue to love her deeply. This is how our heavenly Father loves us, even before we've done anything deserving or undeserving of his love. And, as Christians, as children of God, it is who we are that determines how we live. Our identity, as people having been named with the name of Christ, leads to our behavior, not the other way around. Ultimately, we only know who we are by knowing whose we are.