

Advent: Love

Pastor Jim Thomas
November 28, 2021



SERMON NOTES

“Something ultimate has entered our world, something or Someone that calls us to attention, calls us out of our daily preoccupations and our routine points of view. That is what this season with its special biblical readings is designed to reveal.”

- Fleming Rutledge, *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ*

TVC's foci for Advent 2021...

- Advent Love
- Advent Joy
- Advent Hope
- Advent Peace

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- Because of the **LOVE** of God for sinners,
 - He sent Christ to bring us the **JOY** of salvation,
 - The **HOPE** of eternal life,
 - And the **PEACE** of God to rule our hearts.
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John 3:1-21

The Advent Love of God in Christ

The love of God for us in Christ is...

1. Surprising
2. Mysterious
3. Compelling
4. Transforming

“You can never take God by surprise. You can never anticipate Him. He always makes the first move. He is always there ‘in the beginning.’ Before man existed, God acted. Before man stirs himself to seek God, God has sought man. In the Bible we do not see man groping after God; we see God reaching after man.”

- John Stott, *Basic Christianity*

“Love doesn’t happen in the abstract; it needs an object.”

- Dr. Luder Whitlock, *Divided We Fall: Overcoming a History of Christian Disunity*

Who does God love?

- All the self-righteous religious people and all the self-righteous irreligious people in the world.
- All the prodigal runaways, too embarrassed and ashamed to come home.
- All the prodigal parents waiting at home, praying with all their hearts for a phone call, a text or an email from their daughters and sons.
- All the repeat sinners drowning in guilt and shame who think it’s too late for them, and there’s no way God would ever forgive them this many times.
- All the angry, frustrated, contentious or confused cynics who just don’t know what they believe anymore.
- All those with broken hearts and crushed spirits who had to say goodbye to someone they love over the last couple of years.
- All those who have had to reinvent themselves just to make a living and provide for their household.
- All those who just cannot seem to say “NO!” to controlling habits like drugs, alcohol, pornography, spending or eating.
- All Republicans, Democrats, and Libertarians, etc.
- All corrupt politicians, manipulative media pundits and arrogant pontificators.
- All those who have been used, abused, and cast aside.
- All those who have given all they thought they had only to be rejected and/or disrespected.
- All those who see a threatening storm ahead in the windshield or a giant closing in in the rearview mirror.
- ***We are the ones God loves in Jesus Christ.*** For God so loved the world... and God STILL loves the world!

“Jesus is mysterious not just because of what we don’t know about Him, but because of what we do know about Him.”

- John Ortberg, *Who is this Man?*

“We love until we are betrayed. Jesus continued to the cross despite betrayal. We love until we are forsaken. Jesus loved through forsakenness. We love up to a limit. Jesus loves to the end.”

- Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”

- *John 3:16*

- The initiating love of God
- The expansive reach of God's love
- The motivation for our salvation
- The source of our salvation
- The effect of God's saving love
- The glory of God's saving love

“Advent creates new men and women. Look up, you whose eyes are fixed on this earth, you who are captivated by the events and changes on the surface of this earth. Look up, you who turned away from heaven to this ground because you had become disillusioned. Look up, you whose eyes are laden with tears, you who mourn the loss of all that the earth has snatched away. Look up, you who cannot lift your eyes because you are so laden with guilt. ‘Look up, your redemption is drawing near.’”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

“Though our feelings come and go, His love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to Him.”

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

“This world is a great sculptor's shop. We are the statues and there is a rumour going round the shop that some of us are some day going to come to life.”

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*