

Advent I

December 1, 2024

Romans 13: 8-14 & Matthew 21: 1-13

Today marks the beginning of the Church year 2024-25. This is the First Sunday in Advent. It is the busiest season of the year: people get together for parties; they exchange gifts; And it's like one of those times in the year that everything is going on at the same time and we easily get distracted from our duty of preparation we're supposed to be engaged in. The reason for this distraction is a lack of discipline. It is hard for us not to enjoy the things we always like and cherish in our lives. We get so busy that we even ignore the reason of the season. This is the season of Advent, NOT the season of Christmas or Holydays.

The theme for this first Sunday in Advent is "The Duty of Preparation". Preparation for Christmas is an important theme for Advent, but more is involved. Advent gives us a vision of our lives as Christians and shows us the possibilities of life.

The vision we're talking about here can be seen in two ways: Advent takes us back to the first coming of Christ at Bethlehem. But it also turns us to the future when Christ will come again. Between these two events we find meaning for our life as Christians.

Being a Christian is a journey; a journey that started with the Incarnation of the word of God and will end with the Second coming of Christ. Advent tells us that Christ is coming to judge the world. It reminds us that both the rewards of being faithful and the consequences for sin are real. Therefore, Advent is a time of discipline, a time to fight the right battle, a time to be ready. And the way for us to be ready is laid out by Paul.

But how do we get ready?

To wake up

As Paul said,

Now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness,

St. Paul of course has more than physical sleep in mind here. But consider for a moment some of the aspects of physical sleep. When we sleep, we don't know what is going on around us or even

of what we are doing. Perhaps a family member will say, “When you sleep you talk and snore!” Growing up, I remember my mother telling me that I laugh a lot when sleeping.

What St. Paul is really saying here is that we need to wake up, and become more aware of what is happening in our life.

Another way to be ready is to be dressed up:

And let us put on the armour of light...But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ

Move from reading the Bible to becoming the Bible. That’s the importance of Bible study.

The Book of Revelation speaks of the garment, the long white robe that is given to each of the saints to wear (Rev 6:11). Later, Revelation 19:8 describes the long white robe (of the Bride of the Lamb) as the righteous deeds of all the saints. It is in this sense that St. Paul tells us to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ”. Only Jesus can really get us ready.

The discipline that this season of Advent requires cannot be observed if we don’t let the Spirit of Jesus work in us. Advent is our time to become more involved, more caught up in the meaning and the possibilities of life as a Christian community. Thus we are preparing not only for Christmas but also for Christ’s Second Coming. This means that when he comes again, we will be awake and watchful. He will not find us asleep.

So we pray, **ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen**