

Candle of Justice

Scripture: Isaiah 11:1 – 9

My friends – Winter has started! Let me repeat that – Winter has started! It has been creeping in slowly all along with the lengthening dark hours. One day I looked out my back screened in porch and I saw that every branch on a tree was bare! My ears did not hear a single sound of a bird singing a song except the noise of some geese far away. This is the silence that winter brings! I walked outside the other morning and the grass I walked on was crunchy with a little frost on it. My car did not have a frost on the windows but there was a heavy dew that in a short time will turn into frost! Winter has started!

Millions of people worldwide suffer from SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder). It is a type of depression common in places with limited sunlight due to short winter days. They fear winter's frozen curse will never end. They are eager for any evidence that longer days and warmer temperatures are coming.

In our dark and sometimes seemingly endless winter days when spring does not appear to be breaking through, we face SAD.

In Advent, the world waits with us and we are reminded that the entire cosmos longs for the coming fullness of God's reign.

In our scripture reading from the Book of Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah describes a reality in which the Prince of Peace will bring justice and restoration to the whole of existence. The Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, will bring justice and restoration to the whole of existence.

As we work to eradicate poverty and inequality, Isaiah shares a vision of hope. As we wrestle with the pressing issues of environmental warming, Isaiah's vision speaks of hope. As we sometimes despair over injustice and cruelty, Isaiah's vision is that God's justice will cover the earth like water covers the sea. As we try to justify cruel treatment of immigrants, Isaiah's vision is of a great love.

Together during this Advent season, we wait for wholeness. Today we lite our third candle, the candle of justice. This candle needs to burn brightly because our nation and world needs God's justice. The vision of a peaceful kingdom reminds us that the seeds of this justice are sowed in the birth of a child in a manger. Advent has within it the promise that God's love for us will bear fruit.

During these final stages of Advent, we are called to live in the great promise that everything in the universe is being made new and we are all invited to the daring celebration of God's emerging peace.

Oh yes, today we lite the candle of justice so let us name and celebrate places in our lives where we have witnessed God's justice breaking in. Now in silence, remember God's justice in your life.

(Pause)

In Romans 5:8 it says – *But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners, Christ died for us.*

In the incarnation, God the Son, takes the body and human soul of Jesus and through that, the whole environment of nature into his own being. The Bible clearly distinguishes between the Creator and the created.

The problem for us is that humans are constantly attempting to climb upward and displace the Creator. We try to do this even though the distance between God and us is too great. We need someone who will climb down to us since we cannot climb up to him. Let me repeat that - We need someone who will climb down to us since we cannot climb up to him.

In the incarnation, God took on a created human body. At creation in the beginning of time, God demonstrated his power and will as he created beauty, variety, and complexity.

In the person of Jesus, God created a new dimension of human nature both separate and distinct and both personal and powerful but still part of the created world.

Since Adam and Eve, the created world has been a fallen world. In Christ, God shows evidence that he wants to save us. Since we cannot climb up to God, Christ came to us. Since our efforts were feeble and flawed, Jesus came for us and died for us.

Let us thank God that he did not wait for us to approach him. If he had, he would still be waiting!

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, during this difficult season of winter, it is easy for us to be discouraged. In these hard times, help us place our hope in you. And in every season of our life, help us share with others the peace found in life with you.

God of the poor and powerful, we thank you that you call us all into your kingdom of peace, of justice, and of wholeness. Teach us to notice and nurture the seeds of your kingdom so that the knowledge of your goodness will flood the earth.

Lord Jesus, we come humbly to you with knowledge that you came for us, even when we were sinners. AMEN.