

Advent 1                      12/3/17  
1 Corinthians 1:3-9        B

SERMON TEXT IS THE APPOINTED EPISTLE LESSON FOR THE 1<sup>ST</sup> S. IN ADVENT, FROM 1 CORINTHIANS, THE 1<sup>ST</sup> CHAPTER.

Once again, we find ourselves in the season of Advent. The word “Advent” means “coming” and so, this season, our worship, and our readings all point to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That’s what Paul is doing in our lesson this morning – he writes to us who are waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus. That revealing Paul is talking about is Jesus’ coming again in glory to judge the living and the dead. That will happen on what Paul calls “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

The prophet Joel describes that day with these words,  
“Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes. For behold, in those days and at that time...I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there...The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake (3:1,15-16).

Ouch! That does not sound like a pleasant day.

Especially, when you realize this: That on that day, Paul says, “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Cor 5:10). And you and I both know that in our bodies, we have done much evil. Paul talks of the evil that we do in the body with these kinds of sins: sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, thievery, greed,

drunkenness, revelry, swindling (cf. 1 Cor. 6:10). What is really evil is that we have engaged in some of these sins. We stand guilty. And even more, we have accepted these sins as normal. Many of these are now just a part of every day life. So common in fact, that if you speak out against them you yourself are condemned as an unloving bigot. That's how bad it's gotten with these sins. Even though they are accepted by a large part of our society, it doesn't change the fact that God calls them "sins". Sins which make people enemies of God. Sins which send people to hell.

So, you take all of that, you add it all together, you look at Jesus coming on the day of His revealing to judge the living and the dead, and it's very frightening, because you are a sinner. Yet, Paul says we're waiting for that day; in fact, we're waiting eagerly for it to come.

How can that be? Well, Paul tells you, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." The reason we can eagerly look forward to the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, long for it and pray for it, is because we have received grace and peace from God our Father in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what happened the first time Jesus was revealed. The night of His birth, the angel appeared and said, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:10-11). That's how He was revealed the first time. He came to save you from all your sins.

He did that by living a life of perfect obedience to God's Commandments for you. He even went so far as to bear the punishment for our sins on Himself. That happened when He was beaten, flogged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross. God unleashed all His wrath

against your sin upon Him. Jesus did all that for you, in your place. Because He did, all of your sins are forgiven.

Good news, but the Good news doesn't stop there. Think about that Jesus didn't just come to earth and save you by dying on the cross and then say, "Good luck. I'm going back to heaven; you're on your own. We'll see ya when we see ya." He's the same Lord Jesus Christ who comes to you day after day after day after day by means of His Word and Sacraments. He comes to you to strengthen you so that you can stand guiltless on the day of His revealing.

Look at the words of Paul, "you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ." You are ready for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ because God has given you the spiritual gifts of faith, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

Look at what Paul tells you happened in your baptism:

"the grace of God was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge – even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you".

The grace of God was given to you in that blessed washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit as you received the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and eternal salvation

Good news, but the Good news doesn't stop there. You were enriched in Christ in all speech and knowledge, so with your mouth you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, so that you will be saved (cf. Rom. 10:9). This was confirmed in you as you gladly heard and learned God's Word.

You heard the Word of God through teachers. Teachers like Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and Peter. The very men God inspired

to write the Holy Scriptures. You can read the Bible and find comfort that they were “written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name” (Jn 20:31).

Other kinds of teachers, as well. Teachers called Mom and Dad who brought you to the font of baptism, read Bible stories with you, who taught you to pray, who brought you to the worship services of God’s House. Teachers called Pastors. Sunday School teachers. Catechism teachers. People who explained the Scriptures to you. They taught you about Jesus. So that come the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, you can say that on the basis of that Word of God, He has saved me through His Son.

Good news, but the Good news doesn’t stop there. Look at the words of Paul, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the *communion* of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Yes, I know, the word in the lesson is “fellowship,” but I purposely translated it “Communion” because this is a reference to Holy Communion. The Lord Christ comes to you at His table giving you His very Body and Blood to eat and drink so that all the blessings of the Gospel are yours, namely, the forgiveness of sins and the strength to live a holy life in Christ, especially in these last days.

You can be certain of all this this because God is faithful. When God makes a promise, He keeps His promise. And, His promise to you is that whoever believes in His only-begotten Son will not perish but have eternal life.

You are ready. God has given you all you need for the day of the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, you eagerly long for it to come, because on that day, you will not be condemned. Christ Jesus was judged “guilty,” so that you are “not guilty” in Him. On that day of our Lord Jesus

Christ, He will come take you, body raised and reunited with your soul, into His eternal home.