



“Wait In Wonder...All Is Calm”

First Sunday of Advent
 Saturday & Sunday,
 November 30 & December 1, 2019
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Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 24:36-44

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

I got a text from my son the other morning:

“I have awful news.”

I think to myself:

Alright, stay calm, don't be a dad.

Because *immediately*, all the bad things start going through my head. I text back simply:

“Okay”

And because I'm a dad, I expect him to answer me instantly. And I wait. And I wait. I don't hear anything. So, after about a minute, I text:

“Are you going to tell me, or just make me guess?”

And I wait. And then I wait...some more. And then some more. *Finally*, after what felt like close to an hour and a half, but was, realistically, probably two and a half minutes since he first texted, I get a response.

His awful news? **NOT** that he's been fired. **Not** that his fiancée has been in an accident. **Not** that the puppy ran out into traffic, or that his car has been broken into – again; **not** ANY of the hundreds of awful scenarios that were running through my head. No. They were shopping at one of those big box stores the day before. He tried on a sweater, they continued shopping, had lunch, went home, cleaned the house, walked the dog, had dinner, went to bed, had breakfast, walked the dog. And then, and **only** then, did he realize he had left his *down vest* back at the store. He called the store, and of course, no one had turned it in.

THAT was his awful news.

Admittedly, it was a nice vest. He had it for a few years. Matter of fact, independent of each other, he & I bought matching vests. And, yes, that is some sad news. It is simply **not** the way to let your father know something at 8:52AM on a Tuesday morning. or **any** morning, for that matter.

All is Calm, All is Bright.

We **all** having mornings, or even days, like that, don't we? We all truly want that Christmas Carol – *All Is Calm* – to be part of our lives right about **now**. We want to *wait*

in the beauty of the season, in the wonder of it all.

But it's hard to do, isn't it? We've all just survived the assault of the annual Turkey Day, and the rush and bother and politics and stress of everything **that day** brings. In the broader world, Christmas decorations have been up, in Lowe's, and Walmart, and the mall, for weeks now. The Christmas candy came out in the grocery stores the day *after* everyone was supposed to go Trick or Treating (or was it the day **of**? It's been out for so long, I don't remember). My **mailbox** has been stuffed with catalogues, showing not only the winter fashion, but how much absolute FUN! everyone who is wearing or using those products are having.

And yes, we are all, busy: putting up the tree; hanging lights; or setting up the ornaments; or *whatever* decorations you may put outside. When we take a step back, we can look at our progress, enjoy the efforts of our hands; we take in the *calm*, the calm before the *storm* of when Christmas Day comes crashing in all around us.

WAKE UP! Jesus practically shouts at us in our gospel lesson.

Take a look around you, he says. IS everything "calm"?

The holidays are upon us, and the solid waste material is about to hit the oscillating rotors, and that stuff is going to go *EVERYWHERE*.

Our society is a wreck. We call whatever we don't agree with "fake news." We belittle others simply because they look or sound or act *differently* than we ourselves do. We close our doors to the majority of people seeking help, because a very few have lied to us, and we feel foolish for having been fooled. Our environment is not what it once was and is getting worse the longer we debate about what to do.

Jesus tried to let us know what was coming. He wanted to make us aware of what would happen. He wants us to pay attention.

"Things are going to happen," he warned. "Remember Noah? How life was going along, people getting married, being born, going to work, taking in the harvest, loving, warring, drinking and eating with one another, all until the flood gates from on high burst forth? That's how it's going to be right up until I come back."

Did you notice the emphasis in his story, though? Jesus asks them if they remember the story of Noah. Yes, of course they do. **We all** remember the story of Noah, how he was chosen for his faithfulness. But that's not what Jesus points out. Jesus is **not** emphasizing Noah's *faithfulness*; rather, Jesus is pointing out how everyone around Noah is so totally *unprepared*.

What is it that's important to *you* this Advent season? What do you think you'll spend your time focusing on? The decorations? The cards? The gift buying? The cooking, the baking the cleaning? Those are all fine things. Or will you strive to focus on the life-giving child; that still, small voice with which God often times speaks to us? What is going to bring to you that sense of calm, as we wait in this season of wonder?

Here's a thing, though. My son Evan was right: we **all** have some awful news. Or rather,

some awe-**filled** news: the birth of our Savior; the coming of the Christ Child. And we are, **all** of us, forgiven, loved, and freed from all the hustle and bustle and busy-ness of this world.

No matter what the *world* is telling us about what gadgets we need to have, or what shows we're supposed to be watching, or what clothes advertisers tell us we need to be wearing; regardless of what the world is saying to us about what is supposed to be important and vital and meaningful in our lives: **We** know – we who are believers in the LORD God Almighty, who believe in this God of grace and love and forgiveness – we **know** that Christ is coming – coming to a small village on the far eastern outskirts of the Roman empire, *as well as* coming to us, here, now.

As we *wait in wonder* for the birth of the Christ, remember regardless of what the world is indeed telling us, **All is** Calm. For Christ is with us.

Amen.

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