

Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Advent: A Call to Repentance**

December 4th, 2022. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12**

1. Recall: Advent - A Time of Hope & Preparation

o A Time of Hope

- Advent is a time of celebration of the birth of Christ Jesus - the manifest Kingdom of God that has become reality, God coming to us in human form in the birth of Jesus
- Advent is also a time of *hopeful anticipation of our redemption and the fulness of God's Kingdom on earth*. The mystery of our faith: **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

o A Time of Intentional Preparation:

- o For instance, in today's reading, we see John the Baptist calling for repentance as part of the preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. Recall: The Kingdom of God.

o Kingdom: Oxford Dictionary definitions

- "a country that has a king or queen as head of state
 - the United Kingdom
 - the Kingdom of God (=heaven)"
- "an area controlled by a particular person or where a particular thing or idea is important"

o Both definitions apply so far as God's Kingdom is concerned. The Kingdom of God consists of

- **Heaven**
- **Wherever God's will rules**
 - "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" from the Lord's Prayer
- **Whenever and wherever God's righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit are dominant**
 - "For **the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**"
Romans 14:17NRSV
 - Righteousness involves what is right and just.

- **A manifestation of the power of God is a manifestation of the Kingdom of God, i.e., the Kingdom of God has come.**

- Jesus said,
“if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” Matthew 12:28 NRSV

- The Kingdom of God is both **a present reality** and **a future (eschatological) reality**

We can experience the Kingdom of God now, when we get to heaven, and when Christ returns in the new Jerusalem.

- Jesus our King, Prophet, and Priest

Jesus, the Christ (Anointed One), is our King and it is His Kingdom that we expect to manifest in our lives and in the fullness of time to come. Jesus is also our High Priest, in the order of Melchizedek – and he is at the right hand of God the Father interceding for us always. He is also our prophet and Savior.

In Isaiah’s prophesy, which Paul quotes in Romans 15:12, Jesus is the “root of Jesse” (from the line of King David, whose father was Jesse) who shall come to rule as King, and in whom we have hope as he is our Savior.

3. **Intentional Preparation for the Kingdom**

- **Repentance**

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. How did he do this? He called Israel to repentance, baptized all who repented. This call applies to us as well:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” Matthew 3:2

Repentance called for the confession of sin and baptism:

“Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River”

Matthew 3:6

- **Bearing the Fruit of Repentance**

John also had a second message:

"Bear fruit worthy of repentance..." Matthew 3:8 NRSV

"Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; **every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**" Matthew 3:10 NRSV

Jesus echoed these words in John 15:

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower.

2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.

4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples." John 15:8 NRSV

- **Holy Living**

- **Fruits of the Spirit** Galatians 5:13-22

" the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things." Galatians 5:22-23 NRSV

"May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." Romans 15:5,7 NRSV

- **Be Witnesses of Christ**

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 NRSV

- **Bear Prayer fruit**
"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." John 15:7 NRSV

Also, Jesus instructed us to be alert and in prayer:

"Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."
Luke 21:36 NRSV

- **Make disciples**
"go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" Matthew 28:19 NIV
This is the most important task of all disciples of Christ (all Christians) and the Church