

“The Meaning of Advent”

Isaiah 40:1-6; Mark 13:32-37

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Today’s message is pregnant with possibilities. Advent is a time for great expectations of things to come.

When I was young Christmas meant Gifts.

My parents always gave us small presents on Christmas Eve. My father was an elementary school teacher. My mother always had a tight budget raising three boys. When I was in fifth grade I wanted Nike soccer shoes for a Christmas gift. I prayed hard to God and Santa. Every day leading up to Christmas, I dreamed about wearing Nike shoes. I even told mom about my wish, too, but they were really expensive shoes. On Christmas night, I received soccer shoes, but they were not the ones with the Nike Swoosh I dreamed of. Instead I received a pair of rubber shoes with Spiderman printed on the shoes. Mom bought the shoes from a local market not from the fancy store. I was disappointed in mom and cried out with tears. Now, I believe that it was a very precious gift because I knew that she gave me the best gift that she could within the family budget.

We began Advent season this Sunday. This year, our Advent theme is “Outside the Box: The Gift That Can’t be Contained.” **Advent is a season of waiting and of longing for God’s special and best gift for us.**

Imagine that if God promised you a wonderful gift that you wanted to receive in a month, how do you feel about this offer? Maybe, you will be excited to count days and anticipate the day for receiving the gift like my story. The word Advent means “the presence of the future.” In our Christian faith understanding of time, present is not separated from future, but intertwined. We are the people who live in the presence of the future in hope.

God’s special gift is that God will become a human being, the Christ child in a manger. This uniqueness is found only in Christianity. God clothed himself with a human being and gave us a special gift. Our God humbly came down to us in human form and he experienced our difficulties, sufferings and took our burdens, worries and sins on his shoulders. Why? What does it mean to us?

As we go on to more Sundays, we will discover more meanings of God's gift in God's heart and promise. As you noticed on the entrance doors, we are invited to explore God's special gift for us. With anticipation and excitement, let us journey together and find out more what God has for us.

Amen.