

Advent: What I Have Spoken Will Come True... At the Proper Time

The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in God's presence. I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. Know this: What I have spoken will come true at the proper time." (Luke 1:19-20a, emphasis mine)

These are the words of God's angel speaking to Zechariah, an ordinary priest, as he served in the Temple on an otherwise unremarkable day. Certainly, Zechariah was surprised to be spoken to in this way and he couldn't wrap his mind around what was to happen next. He and his wife, Elizabeth would end up having a son in their old age. John the Baptist was born just about six months before Jesus was born. He would be the one who came before the Son of God, who would bear witness, saying things like: *"Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight... All humanity will see God's salvation."*

As we enter this season of preparation called Advent, we remember the longing of the people of Israel for a Savior. One who would rescue them from their place of oppression and sin. Yes, we can now look back and remember the first coming of the Savior on Christmas Day and how he was born to the virgin, Mary, in Bethlehem. And we do that every year, celebrating the hope, joy, peace, love and warmth of the season in many wonderful ways.

But, what about us today? Don't we still long for a Savior? You know...someone who will make things right for all-time? The truth is, we live in an in-between time in the history of the world. Yes, God's Kingdom has come to earth in the form of the Christ child. Our world is not the same as it was before he came. Bit by bit, things on earth are looking more like heaven than they did. But, deep down, we all realize that there's a lot more that needs to change. God's Kingdom has not fully come on earth as it is in heaven.

In our season of Advent, we have our own longing, the longing for Jesus to return for a second and final time to make all things right. This has been the hope of the Church since it was born 2,000 years ago. And so we hear the words of the angel that were spoken to Zechariah and we might choose to claim them for our own ears: *"I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. Know this: What I have spoken will come true at the proper time."* Perhaps this is a word we need to hear today!

I want to caution us not to skip to the Christmas story too quickly. I know, I know. We have "to-do lists" a mile long that need to be taken care of in the next three weeks. I do too. But, stop for a moment. We need to experience the longing of Advent to truly appreciate what Christmas does for us. And we also need to experience our own Advent, longing for a time when the fulfillment of our communion liturgy will be completed: *"Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again!"*

It will come true, at the proper time.

Hallelujah and Amen!

Pastor David