

1st Sunday in Advent

Nov. 21, 2022 -
Nov. 27, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:1-11

THEME: Come, Lord Jesus! - as King

SONG: CW21 301/ CW93 2 Savior of the Nations, Come

VISUAL: Planner/Calendar that has events marked on it

OBJECT LESSON

Hold up the planner or calendar and ask or tell what it is used for. Talk about how when there is an event coming up, sometimes we plan for it. Give an example like planning for a big party or a school or church event. There is a lot of preparation that goes into an event. Once it is on the calendar, there are some things that need to be done before the event happens. Maybe food has to be ordered or decorations have to be bought and put up. Sometimes the things we do to prepare for an event are very fun. Sometimes the things we have to do for an event are not so pleasant. Cleaning the bathrooms or setting up tables and chairs are not always fun things, but we do them with the end goal—the event—in mind.

BIBLE TRUTH

Here we see Jesus near the end of his life. He arrives humbly to the city of Jerusalem. He is about to suffer and die on a cross. He is about to experience hell. And yet, this is all part of his plan. He has the end goal in mind: gathering his redeemed faithful followers around the wedding banquet of the Lamb. He wouldn't accomplish this feat by gloriously riding his warhorse into the enemy stronghold. Instead he would humble himself on a donkey on a path to death on a cross. This suffering servant would earn heaven for us by taking on our sin and enduring our punishment. Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen. He knew the plan. He was in control of what would happen.

In Advent we learn that this wasn't the first time Jesus appeared as a lowly King. We are preparing our hearts and minds for the celebration of the King of Creation born to poor Jewish parents and placed in a manger. But things aren't always as they seem! The shepherds who heard the voices of angels announcing his birth and celebrating

his incarnation would honor and proclaim this! Yet, to most, he looked like a normal baby born in Bethlehem.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Everything isn't always as it seems. Jesus doesn't look like a conquering hero when he came in the manger or was hanging on the cross. But he did conquer sin, death, and the devil. (Walk over to the baptismal font) What happens here that you can see? What happens here that you can't see?

Baptism and God's Word do not look like anything special. Yet that is where God is working to give and strengthen our faith! When we are sad and when bad things happen, we can know that we are God's children and God's promises are ours! We can look forward to the place that Jesus prepared for us because Jesus is in control of what happens.

PRAYER

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for humbly taking away our sin in your victory over death.. You were in control when you made your triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and you are still in control today. Sometimes I don't remember that and I trust in myself instead of in you. Thank you for reminding me that things aren't always as they seem and bringing me into your kingdom. In your name I pray. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

2nd Sunday in Advent

Nov. 28, 2022 -
Dec. 4, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11:1-10

THEME: Come, Lord Jesus! - as Judge

SONG: CW21 312/ CW93 11 Comfort, Comfort All My People

VISUAL: A judge's gavel or a hammer and a block of wood (maybe in conjunction with a picture of a gavel)

OBJECT LESSON

Bang the gavel loud enough for everyone to hear. When everyone is silent, explain that a gavel is used to get attention from everyone in the room. It is also used in a courtroom to punctuate rulings, in other words, after declaring a person guilty or innocent. Whoever holds the gavel is the authority in charge and that person's word is final. Gavels are typically used by judges in a courtroom and have been used as such in the United States for over 233 years. When the defendant hears that gavel, it can be life changing. They either are free to go home and live their life like normal, or they are given the punishment for the crime they have been convicted of. Sometimes that punishment is simply a fine, but sometimes it is a considerable amount of jail time. Many defendants are nervous to hear the verdict and the final sounding of the gavel.

BIBLE TRUTH

In this section of Scripture, we see that at the end of our life, a judge will declare us innocent or guilty. That makes me nervous. I see all the wrong I do. Maybe you see your own sins, too. Maybe you have cheated on a test or not finished your assignment for a class. Maybe you have said bad things about a friend or lied to your parents. Maybe you have thought that you are better than other people or that you deserve good things more than others. Maybe you remember things you have done a long time ago or maybe you remember something that happened today. Maybe you have thought your sin was really not that bad or maybe you have felt like your life is going to fall apart because of one sin.

Sin is serious. In the Bible, God tells us that even one sin deserves punishment. Unfortunately, that punishment is not simply a fine or even jail time. It is death. Eternal death in hell. We all have sinned many times, but it takes just one to miss the mark

of perfection and send us straight to hell when we die.

But that is why this section of Isaiah is so wonderful. It not only tells us about our judge, but it also tells us who that judge is. Our judge is Jesus! Why is that so great? Because he is the redeemer. He is the one who saw our sin, put it on himself, and took the punishment we deserved. He took our verdict of guilty on himself so we would be declared not guilty (bang gavel). He is the one who redeemed us and he is the one who declares us free from sin. And these beautiful words describing Jesus our judge show us that the battle is over and we are safe and at peace, resting with Jesus in his glorious resting place. And so we declare, "Come, Lord Jesus—as our judge!"

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Can you do such a bad sin that Jesus cannot forgive it? Discuss the term "justification" and how that describes Jesus' work.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, our judge, thank you for taking our punishment on yourself to declare us not guilty. We daily sin much, even when we try not to. Please keep us from temptation and remind us of your love and faithfulness. Keep us ever close to you and let us not fear judgment because we know you are the righteous judge. In your name we pray. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

3rd Sunday in Advent

Dec. 5, 2022 -
Dec. 11, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 11:2-11

THEME: Come, Lord Jesus! - as Messiah

SONG: CW21 812 Christ, the Sure and Steady Anchor

VISUAL: An obscure vegetable (kohlrabi, okra, leek, endive, etc.)

OBJECT LESSON

Hide the vegetable in a podium or somewhere easily accessible to you. Tell the children you have a vegetable hidden here. Ask them to guess what type of vegetable it is. Take a few guesses and then reveal the hidden vegetable. See if anyone can tell what type of vegetable it is. Using an example of one of the guesses, explain how maybe some of the children expected the vegetable to be a [carrot]. They might have thought that because that is their favorite vegetable. They might have thought it was that vegetable because they like the color. Maybe they had that vegetable for a meal recently. Maybe they thought it was your favorite vegetable. Maybe they thought it was a common vegetable, so it was more likely to be picked. We have expectations for things all the time. Maybe it isn't vegetables. Maybe we have expectations for how a test should go or how our day should go. Maybe we expect an event to happen perfectly or at least without any major problems.

BIBLE TRUTH

The Jews had expectations, too. They expected the Messiah to come and deliver them from Roman oppression. They wanted an earthly king who was powerful enough to reestablish the kingdom of Israel. They knew that a powerful Messiah was to come and they were sick of the Romans. They didn't like taxes. They didn't like a pagan government making the rules. They were oppressed and wanted suffering on this earth to end.

We sometimes do the same thing. Maybe we don't want an earthly king, but maybe we want someone to take away all our problems right now. Or maybe we want a Messiah who comes and lets us do whatever we want—eat lots of candy, stay up late, play video games all day and night, never work again. Sometimes we fall into the trap of

wanting to tell God how it is supposed to be and our expectations for our lives.

But while God listens to our prayers and wants and needs, he knows better. His expectations for our lives are so much greater than our own. He knows the happy ending will come. He knows the joy and everlasting life that awaits us. He knows the character we gain from the trials we go through. He also knows how desperately we need the Messiah he promised. We needed someone to solve the biggest problem we didn't even know we had—our sin and resulting separation from God. So God sent that Messiah. The one who fulfilled all prophecy and took our punishment to reunite us with God. We could not have imagined a more perfect Messiah.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Talk about Messiah meaning "the anointed one" and the importance of that name.

What can we do when something in our life doesn't go how we expect it?

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, you are holy. You are perfect. You know how to perfectly bless our lives. We often have different expectations for our lives and forget that you are working out a better plan for our lives than we could ever expect. Forgive us and strengthen our faith to see that the Messiah you sent was the perfect Messiah who solved all our problems. Thank you for being compassionate and gracious and continue to bless us in the ways you only know how. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

4th Sunday in Advent

Dec. 12, 2022 -
Dec. 18, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 7:10-14

THEME: Come, Lord Jesus! - as Immanuel

SONG: CW21 327/ CW93 23 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VISUAL: Wet Floor Sign

OBJECT LESSON

Place the sign somewhere for everyone to see. Ask what the sign is used for. Reiterate that this sign is a warning sign, placed somewhere to let everyone know that the floor could be slippery because it is wet. If a person mopped the floor and did not put up this sign, what could happen? Refusing to put this sign up could cause people to get seriously injured.

BIBLE TRUTH

In our portion of scripture today, King Ahaz was given a warning. God told him to ask for a sign. When God directly tells you to do something, you do it. Ahaz refused. So God gave him a sign anyway. A sign that was an embarrassment for Ahaz, but the sign of our Savior—the most important sign we could ever receive. Even though Ahaz sinned when God was about to give him the most wonderful promise of all scripture, and refused God's words, God still gave them to him. God still gave the promise of the Savior. The sign of the Savior was not something Ahaz wanted to hear. Ahaz didn't want a baby to be more powerful than he—able to save the whole world. He didn't want God to come in such a weak state: a helpless baby born to a woman who was not even married.

We often refuse God's words, too. We don't want to hear how we should listen to our parents and teachers. We don't want to hear how we should always be thankful and not complain. We don't want to hear that we have sinned and are not the good people we think we are. And yet, even though we refuse to listen to God's words, God still loves us. He still gives us his promise of salvation through his son. We didn't even know we needed that promise. We didn't even know the magnitude of what God has done. Even now, we

forget the importance of Jesus coming to earth. He was given the name "Immanuel." Do you know what that name means? Immanuel means "God with us." Maybe you have seen a movie where an all powerful being—a genie, an ancient god, or someone from another planet— comes and helps someone out. Even in those instances, the being is imperfect. But we have God with us. The eternal, omnipotent God came to live with us and promises to be with us always.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Why is it so important that Jesus is "Immanuel"? God kept his promise to send his Son conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. What other promises can you think of that God has kept for you?

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, you chose to give us the gift of your son even when we refused to know him. Open our hearts to hear your words and do what they say. Remind us of your promises and keep us always growing close to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

Christmas

Dec. 19, 2022 –
Dec. 25, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1–20

THEME: A Savior Born to Change the World

SONG: CW21 330 Peace Came to Earth

VISUAL: Mona Lisa picture and a copy with something different about her (hat put on, mustache, etc.)

OBJECT LESSON

Hold up the Mona Lisa with something different about her. Ask if anyone has seen this painting before. Lead the children to saying that while they may have seen it before, something is different about the painting. Then hold up the original. Explain that someone made a silly change to this painting and it made you look differently at the painting. Maybe if you were looking at the original painting, you would do it seriously or admire it up close or just find it boring because you have seen it in so many places. But the changed painting made you look at it differently and with a completely different reaction.

BIBLE TRUTH

When Christmas comes around, we often look for things that are the same every year. We have traditions that stay the same or are very close to the same. We put up a Christmas tree, decorate our house, say Bible passages that are the same from year to year. In our lives, Christmas can look the same every year, and that isn't a bad thing. But sometimes we forget that Christmas changed everything. Jesus coming to earth changed the world. Let's read our Christmas account to see what changed.

Read Scripture lesson.

What changed with Jesus coming to earth? Peace. Jesus brought peace. Jesus coming to earth as a baby proved that God had a plan for salvation and the time had come to enact his plan. God didn't want humanity to remain his enemies because of our sinfulness. So he sent his own Son who took on human flesh. He was born as a baby lying in the manger so he might grow up to die on a cross to bear the guilt of our sins which separated us

from God. That's why the angels sang about peace on that first Christmas night. That's why we sing of peace at Christmas. We could not have saved ourselves or reached heaven on our own. We couldn't change our status of guilty before God. So God changed our status for us. He sent his Son down from heaven to bring peace—the best change.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Change can be a scary thing. Sometimes we don't like change. How is this change different from other changes we experience? How can we look at Christmas as something new every year, even if we have the same traditions?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to earth and changing our relationship with God. Thank you for bringing us peace. Bless our Christmas as we share that peace with others and remind us of the importance of that change in status every year. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.



**HEART
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