

Sunday Message

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year A • 30 November 2025 • Psalter Week 1

STAY AWAKE!

MATTHEW 24:37-44



In today's Gospel Jesus makes comparisons. He compares the people of his day with those of Noah's, who were punished for their wickedness. The people of Jesus' time are not particularly wicked, but they are heedless and unthinking. They get on with life.

They eat, drink, get married. That's all very fine. But the problem is they don't think about their relationships with God or with one another. Due to their ignorance, they won't be ready for God's coming judgement.

Jesus tells a parable about a householder and a thief. It's not the householder's immoral life that causes his downfall. It's his carelessness. God's judgement comes like a thief for those who are not prepared for it.

Be on the lookout! That's the message of this First Sunday of Advent. Things are changing. Property, possessions, power will all pass away. Even health and life do not last forever. Only our relationships with God and one another are eternal.

The season of Advent offers us an opportunity to stand back from the regular routine of life to reflect on our relationship with God and with each other. It is a time to be more conscious of God's presence, so that he will find us ready and waiting when he comes. ■

REFLECT

The message of the season of Advent, and today's readings, is to stay awake and alert so as to be ready to meet the Lord when he comes. One way to do this is through practising mindfulness or attentiveness. Jesus was always attentive. Remember the story of the Widow's Mite in Mark's Gospel. Jesus was observing people as they contributed to the Temple treasury. We can imagine how pleased the Temple authorities were when the well-to-do made big donations, no doubt greeting these rich benefactors obsequiously, how they were oblivious to the poor widow and her equals, failed to see her, failed to appreciate her. After all, she was a nobody whose offering wasn't worth talking about. But Jesus saw her and he drew his disciples' attention to her. He saw what the others failed to see. Time and again, throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus' attention to people, his compassion, his mindfulness. He sees people's need and responds to it. We must bring this attentiveness to our everyday living too, seeking to be attentive in every moment.

It is about practising Present Moment Awareness. To live in each moment, to be

alive to each moment, to not journey through each day carelessly or casually or in a hurry or half asleep. One of the tips I picked up when trying to cope with chronic back pain was to notice when the pain was reduced or even absent. To not let the moment pass, but to register it, savour it, delight in it. We can be so busy or distracted we fail to notice what we should notice, we can fail to live fully attuned to what's going on around us, to the here and now. We can lose our sense of wonder.

As Elizabeth Barrett Browning writes in her poem, "Aurora Leigh", "Earth's crammed with heaven, / And every common bush afire with God; / But only he who sees, takes off his shoes."

The sacred shines through the everyday. We need to see it, to savour it. This season invites us to take off our shoes, to appreciate every moment, to practise present-moment awareness.

Another expression for it is Intentional Living. We don't know how long we have left. It's usually after a health scare or diagnosis of

SAY

"Come, Lord Jesus."

DO

Make some extra time for prayer each day during the season of Advent.

Try to see the sacred in the everyday.

Make an Advent wreath.

PRAY

Ask the Lord to help you live in such a way that you will always be ready for his coming.

LEARN

The word Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming" and refers to the four-week period of preparation for Christmas. *Adventus* is a Latin translation of the Greek word *parousia*, which refers to the future coming or return of Jesus. During the season of Advent we contemplate two different comings of Jesus. The first refers to his birth over two thousand years ago in Bethlehem. The second refers to his future return as judge at the end of time.

a serious illness that we begin to focus on our end, our purpose. But notwithstanding how young or old or fit we are, we should live each day with the end in mind, asking how do I wish to spend this day? It's about my priorities and my relationship to time. Do I live purposefully? Are there obstacles or distractions that prevent me from putting God and my loved ones first?

Again the Advent admonition rings loud: Stay attentive! Stay focused! What might be getting in the way of my purposeful living? Are my priorities right? What would I do differently if tomorrow I was told I had a terminal illness?

Maybe to treasure the gifts of family and friends a little more... maybe to acknowledge kindnesses done... maybe to deepen my relationship with God... maybe to free myself from any unhealthy obsessions or addictions... maybe to make the best use of every, single day... maybe to appreciate the beauty of each day. Intentional living is about identifying and focusing on what's important. Advent challenges us to use time wisely. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.*

COLLECT

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 2:1-5

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah
and Jerusalem.

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
and many peoples shall come, and say:

‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.’

For out of Sion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 122(121):1-2. 4-5. 6-7. 8-9. R. cf. 1

R: Let us go rejoicing to the house of the LORD.

1. I rejoiced when they said to me,
‘Let us go to the house of the LORD.’
And now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem. *R.*
2. It is there that the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD
as it is decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
There were set the thrones for judgement,
the thrones of the house of David. *R.*
3. For the peace of Jerusalem pray,
‘May they prosper, those who love you.’
May peace abide in your walls,
and security be in your towers. *R.*

4. For the sake of my family and friends,
let me say, ‘Peace upon you.’
For the sake of the house of the LORD, our God,
I will seek good things for you. *R.*

SECOND READING Romans 13:11-14a

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters: You know the time, that the hour has
come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us
now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day
is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put
on the armour of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime,
not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and
sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord
Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Psalm 85(84):8

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

Show us, O LORD, your mercy,
and grant us your salvation.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 24:37-44

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: ‘For as were the days of
Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those
days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying
and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the
ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept
them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then
two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left.
Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and
one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what
day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of
the house had known in what part of the night the thief was
coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let
his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for
the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make,
gathered from among your gifts to us,
and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below,
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*The Lord will bestow his bounty,
and our earth shall yield its increase.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May these mysteries, O Lord,
in which we have participated,
profit us, we pray,
for even now, as we walk amid passing things,
you teach us by them to love the things of heaven
and hold fast to what endures.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.