

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

The Advent of our King is a season for the celebration of His coming.

Last week we heard of His coming as our King 2,000 years ago on the first Palm Sunday

to **enter into His glory** surrounded by 2 criminals, crowned with thorns, and enthroned on the cross.

While it was 2,000 years ago for us, God's people had waited for His coming for 1,000s of years, starting all the way back with Adam and Eve.

This week we are considering His future coming in glory,

which could be any day now (or possibly 2,000 years from now)

surrounded by the whole host of heaven sitting on His throne **judging the living & the dead.**

And while we meditate on these 2 advents, these comings, He comes to us in His grace,

to bless and comfort us now as we wait... and work

and trust His promises to come again and take us to Himself.

As follows in Jesus' name:

"Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (ESV)

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth.** Amen.* (John 17:17)

It was just two weeks ago that we had the parable of the 10 virgins

with the same theme: **You also must be ready!**

When our Lord comes, it will be a complete surprise to the world.

Like a thief, He tells us.

It's as if Jesus lived in the Puget Sound area in 2022, isn't it?

It's not so much a matter of if, but when, a thief will strike.

whether just for your catalytic converter, or your whole car, or just some of its contents.

whether it is your local Walgreens, your home, or your neighbor's.

But we are not waiting for Jesus to come AS a thief, for Him to take from us.

We are to be waiting for our Master, the One *who has redeemed us, lost and condemned creatures,*

He has purchased and won you from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil,

not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and His innocent suffering and death.

And if it weren't gracious enough simply to purchase you so that you could serve under His easy yoke,

He also calls those servants **blessed** who are ready for His return

because **HE will dress Himself for service and have YOU recline at table,**

and HE will serve YOU.

He is not a thief who takes, but a Master who gives... and not just for a little while,

but will serve you for all eternity in *everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.*

But how foolish we servants are.

He richly and daily gives us the blessing of time, and we squander it.

We waste it for hours-on-end with mind-numbing, valueless, irredeemable entertainment, and wouldn't know what to do with our evenings if we weren't scrolling or binge watching.

He gives us the blessing of *our reason and all our senses...* and we waste them.

We use our reason for rationalizing / justifying our sins to try to appease our bad consciences.

We waste our senses in selfishly pursuing our own pleasure and self-gratifications.

He gives us food & clothings, & obtaining these perishable things becomes our endless obsession.

He gives us home & family, and how easy it is to treat them either as our slaves or our gods.

He gives us property & goods, and we horde them for ourselves as if He hasn't given enough to share.

So really, Jesus, our Master isn't the thief... You are the thief.

You take His time, His reason and senses, His home and family, His property and goods, and you care little for how He desires that you use them for His glory and service.

You have *stolen, neglected, and wasted* your Masters goods and services.

You act as a *disobedient, dishonest, and lazy* servant, who sleeps on the job and is apathetic to your Master's Word.

...

With such a track record, you would expect that your Master would be coming to you today to take back the *body & life* He gave you, to judge and condemn you, but this is not what He desires to do today for you.

Instead, He desires to come and give you MORE ... more grace.

He came once already to suffer and die for you, to spend His good reputation and perfect obedience, His own body and blood, His holy life and innocent death, all so that you can be forgiven.

In fact, if there is something that Jesus comes to take,

it is to take away your apathy & idleness, your selfishness & greed, your covetousness & idolatry, your laziness and disobedience, your neglect & waste... the bed clothes of faithless servants.

In short, He comes to take away your *sin, death, and the power of the devil* over you,

And in their place, He comes dresses you for action as He gives you, once again, your baptismal attire, as you receive His perfection, His works, and His faithfulness.

He comes to you today to take away your sins & to give you forgiveness... yes, more forgiveness;

He comes to give you new life in Him, **to dress you for more action,**

for the good works which He, your gracious Master, has prepared in advance for you to do.

And He comes to strengthen you by the power of His might in the Sacrament of the Altar so that you can resist the power of the devil and his temptations.

He comes to redeem your time, so that you are ready in **the second or third watch,** or whenever He comes.

And He continues to give you *your reason & all your senses, your food & clothings, home & family, property & goods, and all that you need to support this body and life.*

And with them, your Master desires that you dutifully use them,

yes, for your own welfare and for the welfare of your family, your closest neighbors, but also for the welfare of your neighbors in need;

That you use them to give the greatest Christmas gift to those around you, Jesus your Savior & theirs;
That you use them in acts of mercy and charity,
not with a stingy spirit or given that they should owe you,
but with the same generous spirit with which Your Master has *richly and daily provided* for you.

And after giving you all these things, and the opportunities to serve Him,
He promises to give you still more blessing.
After cleansing your conscience and clothing you in His righteousness and His purity,
and giving you the readiness for His own return,
He then pronounces you a **blessed servant** and promises,
that when He returns in His glory, **He will dress Himself for service and have you recline at table,**
and He will come and serve you.

Let us pray: Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria