



The Gospel

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

Jesus said to his disciples 'in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.



'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

Some thoughts on today's Gospel reading from Revd. Maureen

When I was young, visiting my grandparents for a holiday, I remember the excitement and expectation I experienced in waiting for my favourite Auntie and her family to arrive for Sunday tea. I would be unable to sit still, and would either be lurking by the large front window or even swinging on the garden gate looking down the road in order to first catch sight of their arrival.

This is surely how we should feel at the beginning of Advent: a season of expectation and preparation for the coming (adventus) of Christ. Traditional themes for Advent meditation have been The Four Last Things – Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell. In more recent times the Church has offered other themes on which to focus on each of the four Sundays in Advent which are perhaps less "scarey" or daunting, as we light a candle each week for: the Patriarchs; the Prophets; John the Baptist; and the Blessed Virgin Mary.



There is a little word within our Gospel reading today which seems to me to be paramount for us at this point in the church's year: 'alert'. We are learning to be alert to symptoms of the coronavirus, but I would like to offer something to help us to focus on this word 'Alert' during Advent. How about: A = Awareness; L = Light; E = Expectancy; R = Rejoice; T = Thanksgiving. Be more Aware - of God in our life; the Light - of each of our Advent candles each Sunday; be Expectant – looking/yearning for the coming of Christ; Rejoice - Mary's response to the Angel: My soul rejoices in God my Saviour; and Thank God for the precious gift of his Son who came among us as a human being and whose birth we prepare to celebrate.

Maureen

Benefice online

Revd Mark has created two videos for this Sunday. Please click on the links below to view them on your device. Please note that the videos will be published at 10.00am on Sunday and will not be accessible prior to that time.



VIDEO 1

https://youtu.be/Cml_veJ8UqU



VIDEO 2

https://youtu.be/GBnut_m6ioY

These videos are hosted on the Bishops Lydeard Benefice YouTube channel.

Up to date information about what is happening in the benefice can be found on our website bishopslydeardbenefice.org

Intercessions for the First Sunday of Advent



First Sunday of Advent

we pray in faith for the needs of our world and church and thank you for your goodness.

Almighty God, we pray for your church worldwide as they meet in any way they can, to praise you and to hear your holy word. Give your whole church a sense of expectation as we wait for your coming.

We pray for your blessing on all those who lead, preach and teach and we pray especially for the ministry team in our benefice as they seek to do your will and guide us through our spiritual and worldly journey, until the day when we celebrate the birth of your Son on Christmas day.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer

Merciful God, we pray for your wisdom for our politicians. Revive their dreams of justice and truth and restore our passion for what is good and right. Establish your just and gentle rule throughout the world, especially where there is conflict; where peace seems so far away and so many have lost everything, even the hope of a peaceful future. Govern the hearts and minds of all world leaders and those in authority that they may act justly, honestly and according to your will especially at this time of the global pandemic.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer

Continued...

Loving God, we pray for all who see Advent as hectic and worrying run-up to the excesses of a secular Christmas. Help us as we try to set an example of a true spirit of preparation for that incredibly precious gift of the Christ-child. May they see in our outreach and services, whether in church, at home, or online, the true meaning of Advent and Christmas and experience your love for them through the giving of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer

Merciful God, we pray for all who will find today long and painful, for those in hospital or ill at home, those struggling with despair or depression and for all those who care for them. Comfort and heal all who suffer, especially at this time of the pandemic, give them courage, healing and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer

Loving God, we pray for those who have recently received a life changing diagnosis and for those for whom today will be their last. Be near to all who mourn and comfort them with the knowledge that in the coming of your son Jesus the gates of heaven will be opened wide for all who accept him as Lord and Saviour.

Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer

Advent Lord, as we move into the new liturgical year, draw near to us, strengthen our faith, deepen our love for you and for all our neighbours and open our eyes to the wonder of your creation, so that when our Saviour comes, he may find our hearts ready to receive him.

Merciful Father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Collect for the Day

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.



PRAY EVERY WAY YOU
KNOW HOW, FOR
EVERYONE YOU KNOW.

PRAY ESPECIALLY FOR
RULERS AND THEIR
GOVERNMENTS

to rule well

so we can be quietly
about our business
of living simply, in
humble contemplation.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (MSG)

