



Waiting with Wonder

ADVENT REFLECTIONS

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: THE WONDER OF PEACE

Advent is a season when we celebrate the light of Jesus coming into the world. This light gives us hope and shows us the way.

In our service this week for the second Sunday of Advent, we reflected on the story of Jesus birth in the Gospel of Matthew. This story begins a theme that continues throughout this Gospel comparing Jesus to Moses. Jesus is like a second Moses. Moses led his people out of slavery and oppression in Egypt and gave them a way to live. This was called Torah – laws and rules for living God’s way that would lead to love, peace, and justice in society and everyone’s personal lives. The Hebrews call this dream “Shalom” (peace). But there was a huge problem in that imposing these rules from the top down just didn’t seem to work. So the Hebrew prophets looked forward to a time when a new kind of leadership and government would come:

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (NIV)

Jesus comes as the fulfillment of this hope. Jesus lived the kind of life the Torah was trying to accomplish. Jesus embodied this life. Jesus was the incarnation of this beautiful divine life of peace. Jesus didn’t try to impose this way through rules but by becoming the way and calling us to follow and live like him.

(Continue reflection on the next page)

Take a moment to reflect on the passage from Isaiah above:

- What could a government of peace look like in this world?
- What would a kingdom of justice and righteousness look like?
- What do peace, justice, and righteousness look like in our own lives?

The Christmas story is not very peaceful in many ways. There is struggle, tension, and difficulty. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is hunted down and his family has to flee. He is a refugee in Egypt and ends up having to return to a different hometown because of danger. This tension continues throughout his life as he challenges people, rulers, and systems to align with peace, justice, and righteousness. So Jesus is not the Prince of Peace because he's always chilled out or unstressed. He's the Prince of Peace because his whole life is aligned with God's light and love. That alignment is what energizes his work for peace. It also centers him on God, which is in itself a peaceful alignment because it means a natural flow in the current of God's love, rather than a fight.

Take a moment to light the first "hope" candle (purple) on your Advent wreath again. Then light the second "peace" candle (also purple). As you gaze into the flame, reflect on the following:

- This Advent what might be keeping you from receiving the light of Jesus and experiencing peace?
- How do you need to change to align more with the way of Jesus?
- Where do you need peace in your personal life?
- What action(s) do you need to take to bring more peace, justice, and righteousness in the world around you, even if those actions might seem to cause conflict and discomfort?

Close by sitting in silence. Open your heart to the Prince of Peace and invite the Light in as you wait with wonder.