

## Waiting

Isaiah 52:7-10

Crossroads Christian Church

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

November 29, 2015 Advent 1C

VOICE 1: Waiting

VOICE 2: Like a child, full of eager longing, wondering if what she wants is in that shiny package. Waiting

VOICE 1: in fear and hope, sitting on hard plastic chairs in the surgery waiting room, won't the surgeon ever come to bring us the news? Waiting

VOICE 2: like an expectant mother, counting down the days, struggling with pain, counting the months, the days, the hours, to bring her child into the world. Waiting

VOICE 1: like a soldier in a transport plane, moving across the wide ocean, wondering what it will be like there, in the combat zone. Waiting

VOICE 2: like parents who heard sirens at midnight, hoping their teenaged child will phone and check in.

TOGETHER: Waiting. Advent is waiting.

VOICE 1: Waiting for news

VOICE 2: Waiting for God to do something.

VOICE 1: Waiting in darkness for light.

VOICE 2: Waiting in fear for hope

VOICE 1: Waiting for a promise to be fulfilled

VOICE 2: Waiting for God to be with us.

SING: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Chalice 119, verses 1 and 2)

VOICE 1: O come, Emmanuel. We who feel far from God's presence want to feel close again.

VOICE 2: O come, Emmanuel. We are in exile, dislocated, strangers in a strange land. Lead us home.

SING: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verses 3 and 4)

TOGETHER: Rejoice! Rejoice!

VOICE 2: Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

VOICE 1: Emmanuel. God is with us.

SING: Emmanuel, Emmanuel (Chalice 134)

VOICE 1: While we are waiting in exile, the word of the prophet Isaiah comes.

VOICE 2: Comfort, comfort my people! says your God.

Speak compassionately to Jerusalem,

and proclaim to her that her compulsory service has ended,

that her penalty has been paid,

that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins!<sup>1</sup>

SING: Comfort, Comfort You My People (Chalice 122 verse 1)

VOICE 2: In words that will be echoed many centuries later by John the Baptist, Isaiah of the exile says, "A voice is crying out: "Clear the Lord's way

---

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 40:1-2 CEB

in the desert!

Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!

Every valley will be raised up, and every mountain and hill will be flattened.

Uneven ground will become level, and rough terrain a valley plain.

The Lord's glory will appear, and all humanity will see it together;

the Lord's mouth has commanded it."<sup>2</sup>

VOICE 1: Advent is the time for waiting, for listening for the poet's voice.

Ann Weems tells us of the Coming of God.

Our God is the One who comes to us

in a burning bush,

in an angel's song, in a newborn child.

Our God is the One who cannot be found

locked in the church, not even in the sanctuary.

Our God will be where God will be

with no constraints, no predictability.

Our God lives where our God lives,

and destruction has no power

and even death cannot stop the living.

Our God will be born where God will be born,

but there is no place to look for the One who comes to us.

When God is ready

God will come

even to a godforsaken place

like a stable in Bethlehem.

Watch...

For you know not when God comes.

Watch, that you might be found

whenever

Wherever

God comes.<sup>3</sup>

VOICE 2: So we wait, and we watch, as watchers waiting for the dawn.

VOICE 1: So we wait, and we watch, in the not yet, waiting for the now.

VOICE 2: In this in-between time, we trust the promise, like Isaiah did.

VOICE 2: We trust the promise like Mary did.

VOICE 1: We trust the promise, because God is trustworthy, and God's promise can be trusted.

SING: Comfort, Comfort You My People (vs. 2-3)

VOICE 1: In this in-between time, we do more than wait. We prepare.

VOICE 2: Ah! So much preparation for Christmas! Presents to buy! Presents to wrap! Food to buy! Food to cook! The house to clean! The house to decorate! Sometimes it's just too much.

---

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 40:3-5 CEB

<sup>3</sup> Ann Weems, *Kneeling in Bethlehem*, Westminster, 1980, p.13.

VOICE 1: But, more important than preparing for Christmas, we prepare for Christ. We invite Jesus, yet again, to be born into our hearts.

VOICE 2: So our preparation must take time just to sit; just to listen; just to pray.

VOICE 1: And our preparation must take time to remember that it's all about love.

VOICE 2: Family love and love of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and love for all the people whom God created.

VOICE 1: Let us be guided by the words that Paul wrote to the Thessalonians—and to us: "May the Lord cause you to increase and enrich your love for each other and for everyone in the same way as we also love you. May the love cause your hearts to be strengthened, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his people."<sup>4</sup>

VOICE 2: This love is more than just a warm, fuzzy feeling. It's action. It's sacrifice. It's sharing. It's compassion in action.

VOICE 1: Someday, our days of waiting will end.

VOICE 2: Someday, we will return home. The wilderness will not stop us.

VOICE 1: Waiting will lead to preparation.

VOICE 2: Preparation will lead to a new beginning.

VOICE 1: The new beginning will lead us to God's salvation.

SING: Prepare the Way of the Lord (Chalice 121 Taize)

VOICE 2: When our waiting is over,

VOICE 1: When God delivers us home,

VOICE 2: We will sing from every mountaintop.

SING: Go Tell it On the Mountain (Chalice 167)

VOICE 1: So let us wait with eager expectation.

VOICE 2: Let us wait, knowing that the time is coming when all will be fulfilled.

VOICE 1: Let us wait, trusting in the promises of God.

VOICE 2: Let us wait, as children of hope.

VOICE 1: Let us open our hearts and let Christ in.

SING: Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates (Chalice 129, vs. 1-2)

MIKE: Behold, the King of Glory waits. We are waiting for Christ, and Christ is waiting for us. Let us commit ourselves to wait for Christ, and to follow Christ during this Advent season.

By Michael E. Dixon

---

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thessalonians 3:12-12, CEB