

Advent III
December 13, 2009
Sermon - Christ Church Parish
Father Richard Hobbs
1 Corinthians 4:1 and St. Matthew 11:2

In the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. ❀

Get Ready! Be Prepared! This message is the recurring theme of Advent. The question is "What are we getting ready and preparing for?" When I was in the Marine Corps we had a yearly event called an IG. This was when a General and a team of Officers from Headquarters' Marine Corps came and inspected the readiness of a unit. It was not just the enlisted personnel, who were inspected, but the Officers and Commander as well. I hated IG's because there were so many things that needed to be done in order to make the inspection successful, but when the inspection was over and a successful grade was given it was time to party.

This is what Advent is about, getting ready and preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ. Each of us has things that need to be done NOW; So that Jesus will find things ordered to His liking in our lives. When we follow Jesus because of our love for Him, we can pass from this mortal life to an immortal life with Jesus in Heaven. Otherwise the consequences of failing to follow and Love Jesus are too painful to contemplate.

In a way we are victims of God's Love for us, in that we get complacent and start being less than we can be. We let the problems in the world, personal relationships, and boredom with life in general affect our resolve to lead lives in accordance with God's plan for each one of us. Psalms 56 and 57 illustrates the approach we need to take in finding our way to a successful relationship with Jesus. We tend to forget that Jesus has placed us within His protection and we get hurt when we wander outside of that protection or are inattentive to what the Scriptures say.

As mentioned in last week's class the Sacraments and the Bible are the tools, which God has given to keep us from falling into slovenly living, but we must use these tools and not let them sit on the coffee table and gather dust. Just like the Marine Corps has a guide book which sets the standards by which Marines are to live and keep their gear, the Bible and the Sacraments sets the standards by which we are to abide in the love of God and how we are to treat each other.

St. John's message to us today is "Repent, and turn to God". St. Paul's message is "Do not judge other people or yourself, because that is the purview of God, but be a faithful servant of God and take care of the Earth and each other. Jesus made everything in and on the Earth and we are to care for what He has made, including each other and the environment. This is what St. Paul means by being "good stewards of God's mysteries."

Fr. Michael said last week that we live in Heaven or Hell right now by the decisions we make today, at the second coming of Jesus Christ, when Jesus judges the world our judgment will be a confirmation of the decisions we make today. Jesus has opened the gates of Heaven to all people, but we must be ready and be prepared now, so we will be able to face judgment and not be fearful of Hell. Instead we will be enjoying the big party in Heaven, which God is preparing for all people who overcome the World by believing in God's plan for Salvation, which Jesus Christ has provided for us.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. ❀