



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Advent 1 Midweek
November 30, 2022

No Christmas?!

Matthew 21:1-11; Romans 13:8-14

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

So, what do you think? Just skip Christmas this year? Forget the whole thing. Call it off. That thought horrifies you. Stores and retailers and the Great American Family Channel would certainly be. For they, like some people, look forward to Christmas all year. But that may in fact be God's plan. That there would be no Christmas this year, because the King is coming back before then.

That reality, or the possibility of it, is the reason, in fact, for this season of Advent which celebrate. This season, these four weeks before Christmas, *aren't* here to get us ready to celebrate Christmas, but to prepare us not to. To prepare us for if there is no Christmas this year, and for that possibility to fill us not with sadness, but with joy! Because when the King comes back, when Jesus comes back, it will be for us a day of unparalleled joy. A day the joy of all your best Christmases put together would not even begin to compare.

Besides, you don't have to be a Christian to celebrate Christmas . . . as it has become. Even many unbelievers sing the carols that speak of Jesus' birth - but don't really care about it. They believe it happened, I suppose. Historically speaking. But it doesn't mean anything to them. He has no relevance for their lives.

So, if all the Church does during Advent is prepare for Christmas, we are no different than the world, and no better for it. So, it must be more than that. And it is. Advent prepares us for if there is no Christmas this year, and helps us see once again that Christmas is not the big celebration that comes at the end of every year, but the beginning of something new. Not the end of an old year, but the beginning of a new life.

And so, we heard today the account of Jesus riding into Jerusalem - entering the city He knows will kill Him. It's very unChristmassy. It's adult Jesus, not baby Jesus. The donkey's not looking into the manger, but being ridden on by the one who once laid in it. It's not the beginning of Jesus' life in this world, but mere days from the end of it. And it's not the angels singing *Glory to God in the highest* (Luke 2:14) to shepherds, but the crowds shouting out ***Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!***

We'll sing *Glory to God in the Highest*, too . . . soon . . . when we celebrate Christmas - IF we do! But for now, we sing Hosanna. Every week. In the liturgy of the Lord's Supper. Hosanna is a very adventy word. *Glory to God* is an announcement, a proclamation. *Hosanna* is a prayer. It means:



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Advent 1 Midweek

November 30, 2022

Help us, Lord. Save us. Intervene and rescue us. The people of Jerusalem were crying that out in their distress and confessing their faith. That Jesus is the Son of David. The one who *could* save them and rescue them. The promised one come to be their king again. To set things right again.

That's a good prayer. It's a good desire. It's the *how* the Jesus' throne is a cross, His crown is of thorns, and that He saves by not saving Himself. That's not how the world does things. That's why Pontius Pilate is so stumped. *What do you do with a king whose kingdom is not of this world? What do you do with a king who fights not with weapons but with words? What do you do with a king who is not about power but about truth?*

We might ask the same. Jesus' humility is proof for some that He cannot be God. No God worth believing in, would be like that. But to others, though - to us! - this is the deepest revelation of His nature. A contradiction only in this world. That's God's almighty power is joined with a boundless love so great it allows Him - no, it *compels* Him! - to be trampled upon and sacrificed to save the children He loves.

So those prayers of Hosanna are answered with His *It is finished*. He loses His life that we might gain our own. That we might gain a life in Him, a life that is eternal; not a life that is here today and gone tomorrow. Not a life that is found in the things of this world. We already have that kind of life. Jesus has come to give us more than that, and better than that.

So, the Church, in her wisdom, put Hosanna into the liturgy for us to sing every week. It doesn't have to be there, but it's good that it is. To teach us, as Paul said to us today, that ***salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed***. That one year, there really won't be a Christmas. And that is a good thing.

*So, what if you knew . . . what if you knew that this would be the year? The year with no Christmas? That, again to use Paul's words, **the day is at hand**. The day of the Lord's coming. That sometime in the next 24 days, the King is coming back. You will see Jesus. What would you do . . . now?*

Well, this is what Paul said: ***So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. So, have you? Cast these things off? Or have you indulged your sinful desires and welcomed the darkness that hides you and keeps you safe? Have you Hosanna-ed Jesus to save you from these? Or are you not ready to leave them yet?***

Truth is, we are, and we aren't. We do and we don't. We're one way one day and different the next. Even hour to hour! *But what if you knew there would be no Christmas this year? Would you change?*



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Advent 1 Midweek

November 30, 2022

That's the possibility this season of Advent is putting before you. And calling you to repentance and change. That whether Jesus comes again soon or not, that whether we get to celebrate Christmas or not, your life be filled not with the works of darkness, but with love and joy. Which is exactly why Jesus entered this world; and entered Jerusalem on that donkey. To provide that for you. To give you that kind of new life.

Which He did on Good Friday. This is the day when our sinful debt to God was washed away by the red blood of Jesus shed on the cross. So, we're on the right side with God again. Not the side of sin and death, but the side of resurrection and life. Because we're washed clean and righteous again. So that if Christmas doesn't come this year, that's okay. It will be a day even better.

That's hard to imagine. That's okay. We learn. We grow. And it's always by faith - faith that what Jesus has told us is true. But not blind faith, but faith that looks to the cross and empty tomb and says *Amen!* My sin paid for; my death defeated. Jesus answered my Hosanna. *It is finished.*

But we still live in a sin-filled world and sinful bodies and lives. And so still today we pray our Hosannas, for still today there is darkness in our hearts and in our lives, in our thoughts and our desires, in our words and our deeds. We have given ourselves to what we should not, have not loved God above all things, and have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have favored our own agendas rather than the truth. We'd rather lead God in the way we *want* Him to go, rather than follow Him in the way we *should* go. We don't want to learn from God's Word as much as be wiser than it. It's true.

And so, we will pray Hosanna! once again, today - Help us, Lord! Save us! - and it will never be more true. And today Jesus will answer: I come for you now, I come to you now, here in this way, giving you My forgiveness and life and my *it is finished*, that you be ready. Ready for no more Christmases on earth, but the eternal Christmas of heaven. Ready to join the shepherds, the crowds, and the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven around the King in His glory.

That's what this season of Advent prepares us for. That if Christmas comes, we rejoice in the coming of our Savior in humility. And if Christmas does not come this year, we'll rejoice even more in the coming of our Savior in glory. And that we live this season and every day, knowing that ***salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.*** And that ***the night is far gone; the day is at hand.*** The day when those nail-pierced hands of Jesus will welcome us home.

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.